DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 264 360 UD 024 636

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TITLE Stable Black Families. Final Report.

INSTITUTION Howard Univ., Washington, D.C. Mental Health Research and Development Center.

PUB DATE Dec 83
NOTE 109p.
AVAILABLE FROM Mental Health Research and Development Center, Institute for Urban Affairs and Research, Howard University, 2900 Van Ness Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20008 ($3.00).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Black Family; Blacks; Church Programs; Depression (Psychology); *Family Life; Family Programs; *Family Structure; Marital Satisfaction; One Parent Family; Religion; Self Help Programs; *Social Support Groups; Socioeconomic Status
IDENTIFIERS District of Columbia

ABSTRACT

This document is the final report of a study conducted to determine what factors contribute to strong Black family life and how these strong families solve problems, in order to add to the knowledge base on stable families so as to enhance practical intervention with families in need, and to identify models of self-help strategies used by stable families. The study group consisted of 26 husband-wife families and 24 female-headed families in the Washington, D.C. area. Individual interviews were conducted to determine the families' socio-demographic characteristics, neighboring and organizational participation, daily routines, skills, problems, and coping strategies, as well as religiosity, depression, and family environment. It was found that the sample group was above the median compared to other Black and White families in income, education, and employment. They were found to be resourceful and unlikely to seek outside help to solve problems. The problems most frequently experienced by the group pertained to finance, marriage, and children. The most often cited problem with children was depression. Job dissatisfaction was reported more than any other concern. All respondents, especially single women, were very religious, and most displayed no symptoms of depression. Some suggestions drawn from this study for helping other Black families with their problems are: (1) churches should develop family programs; (2) programs should stress prevention themes; (3) churches could use stable family members as family aides; (4) the incidence of depression in Black children should be further studied; and (5) self-help materials and activities should be emphasized. Eighteen tables are included in the text. (CG)

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STABLE BLACK FAMILIES

FINAL REPORT

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December 1988

UD024636

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Abstract

A study was conducted to: (1) determine the critical factors and conditions that contribute to strong Black family life; (2) identify strategies employed by families in solving the problems of living; (3) add to the knowledge base on stable families that would enhance practice intervention with families that are in need of help; and (4) identify models of self-help strategies used by stable families. Fifty (50) families from the Washington, D. C. area (26 husband-wife and 24 headed by females), nominated by community groups because of the perceived strengths and stability of the families, comprised the sample. Seventy-six (76) individual interviews were conducted to obtain information on the families' socio-demographic characteristics, neighboring and organizational participation, daily routines, talents and skills, problems experienced, and coping strategies. Measures of religiosity, depression, and family environment were also taken.

The sample group, as a whole, was above the median in comparison to other Black and white families on such socio-demographic indices as income, education, and employment. They were remarkably self-resourceful and talented or skilled. They seldom used informal or formal sources of help to solve their problems. If they did seek help, however, they were likely to consult a relative or a friend. Problems were solved through discussion within the family.

The problems most frequently reported by the sample pertain to finances, marriage, and children. The most often cited problem with children was depression. All respondents reported that they

were more dissatisfied with their jobs than they were with any other aspect of their lives.

All respondents, especially single women, were very religious, and most displayed no symptoms of depression. However, single women heads of household did show slightly more depressive symptoms than did either married men or married women.

It is suggested that: (1) churches develop family programs which address the problems identified in the study; (2) programs be developed around prevention themes; (3) churches use stable family members as lay leaders or family aides; (4) the incidence of depression in Black children be further explored; and (5) self-help materials and activities be emphasized.

Acknowledgments

The authors appreciate the help provided by individuals who have given much in order to complete this research. We extend special thanks to Diane R. Brown, Senior Research Associate, and Lucy Drayton, Research Associate, at the Institute and our consultants, Dr. Karen K. Petersen and Dr. Neil W. Henry, who assisted us in the conceptualization of the project. We are indebted to Brenda A. Allen, Graduate Research Assistant, for her invaluable help in writing the final report. Special thanks are due Emma Davis. She provided administrative support for the project and prepared the final manuscript.

It would not have been possible to undertake this study without the cooperation of families who participated in the project. To each family, we owe a special thanks. Our interviewers are also acknowleged for their contributions to this project. They were very helpful not only in collecting the data, but also in suggesting ways for improving the project. Finally, special recognition is accorded the Commission on Racial Justice of the United Church of Christ for the necessary financial support to make this study possible. To Dr. Charles E. Cobb, Executive Director of the Commission and our project officers from the Commission on Racial Justice, Ms. Felicia I. Kurtz and Dr. Aminifu R. Harvey, we appreciated very much your suggestions for and support of this project.

However, all interpretations, conclusions, errors and omissions in this study are the sole responsibility of the authors: Lawrence E. Gary, Ph.D., Principal Investigator; Lula A. Beatty, M.S., Project Director; Greta L. Berry, M.S., Research Associate, and Mary D. Price, M.A., Research Associate.

December 1983

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Chapter I

Introduction

The family is considered to be the basic social unit in any society and the primary socialization agent. Individual and group competency and survival are determined, in part, by how well families function. Family strength and stability become, then, important indicants of the status of a group. If one is concerned about the progress of a people, it is imperative to understand the dynamics of its family life and particularly the approaches and skills its families use to master societal demands successfully.

The dynamics of Black family life in America have been distorted and misrepresented by the majority of social scientists. Many have presented Black family life from a pathological perspective -- characterizing it as weak, deficient and deviant. Without extensive elaboration here, the cause of this distortion and misrepresentation is primarily twofold: (1) conceptualizations and paradigms used to assess, analyze, and interpret the behaviors of Black Americans are often internally invalid for that population; and (2) Black individuals and families included as research subjects or program participants are often representative of only a distinct problem-ridden group and are not representative of the general Black population. Moreover, there seems to have been little interest or effort in documenting and exploring those facets of Black family dynamics that are positive. A consequence of the prevailing distorted view of Black family life is that comprehensive information or models of

"healthy" Black families on which to base prevention programs and support services for Black families, when needed, are lacking.

Although there have been a few researchers who have rejected the pathological view, their numbers are small (but growing) and their efforts have, for the most part, been confined to refutation of prevailing views primarily on theoretical grounds, rather than on the basis of primary empirical evidence. Described in this report is a research study conducted to increase our understanding of the dynamics of strong, stable Black families. It is postulated that learning more about these families will provide the necessary data for developing meaningful intervention programs and directing future research efforts.

Chapter II presents an overview of the pertinent literature and specific study objectives and expectations. In Chapter III, the methodology is described. Findings are presented in Chapter IV and discussed in Chapter V, where program and research implications of the study are also discussed.

Chapter II

Literature Review, Objectives, and Expectations

A. Literature Review

An attempt was made to present in a concise, yet accurate, manner literature on the stability and strengths of Black families that reflects the state-of-the-art. Towards this end, the review focused on works judged to be pivotal or critical in the field and/or those that included Black families as study participants.

In the planning phase of the study, stability was the key measure or dimension of interest. However, the concept of stability as used in the field was found to be too restrictive to permit the collection of the kinds of information desired in this study. Stability, in fact, seemed to be antithetical to the study objectives and the very nature of the study envisioned. The concept of family strength emerged as a measure of greater value. Some discussion of these two concepts follows.

Family instability has been variously defined as marital instability or maladjustment and family dissolution and disorganization. This confusion in terminology has led to endless problems of vagueness in definitions which are essentially meaningless in their adequacy for differentiating among family and marital disorders. The demographic definition emphasizes the structural arrangements of family organization. Farley and Hermalin (1971) include the following demographic indicators in their definition of family stability: (1) the marital status of adults; (2) the family headship rates of men and women; (3) the

composition of families by type; (4) the rates of childbearing by married and unmarried women; and (5) the living arrangements of children. Hence, according to their definition of family stability, a decrease in the proportion of adults who are married and living with their spouse, a higher proportion of families headed by women, an increase in the proportion of illegitimate children, and a decline in the proportion of children living with both of their parents would suggest a lack of family stability.

Most definitions of stability imply a situation where husbands and wives are present in the home and consider the one-parent family as an inferior adaptation of family structure. These definitions make implicit assumptions about the most desirable family form or structure and tend to place great emphasis upon social problems such as divorce, separation, illegitimacy, and father absence as signs of instability. Many researchers are beginning to question this direction in family research. They argue that marital instability is not the same as family instability.

Billingsley (1968) takes the position that family stability is a vanishing phenomenon and illusion. He asserts that "... the only meaningful definition of family stability is that two people marry and stay married until one dies, and that the children, all conceived after marriage, live within the family household until their maturity." Billingsley and Hill (1972) are, perhaps, the forerunners in providing a theoretical construct of Black family strengths. In this regard, Billingsley (1968) identifies "opportunity screens" as being key to the survival and stability of many Black families. These "opportunity screens" are described

by Billingsley (1968) as: (1) a set of values--with an accompanying pattern of behavior which is consistent with those values--and a certain degree of independence from the control of the forces affecting the lives of family members; (2) strong religious convictions and behaviors; (3) educational achievement or educational aspirations of one or more family members: (4) economic security and possession of property; (5) strong family ties; and (6) community-centered activities (i.e., associational ties, role models, and child advocacy). Billingsley's conception of family strengths is important in that it was among the first to identify and explore positive aspects of Black family relationships. However, a shortcoming of Billingsley's work is that he does not provide any empirical evidence to support his propositions.

Hill's (1972) family strengths conceptualization focuses on the internal dynamics of family life while largely ignoring the structural arrangements. He identifies and analyzes five strengths of Black families, which are as follows: (1) strong kinship bonds; (2) a strong work orientation; (3) adaptability of family roles; (4) a strong achievement orientation; and (5) a strong religious orientation. He notes that, although these traits may be found among white families, they are manifested differently among Black families as a result of the history of racial oppression experienced by Blacks in America.

Hill's work is ingenious in that he has taken the same statistics that other researchers have used to focus upon the weaknesses of the Black family to show its strengths. However, given the importance of the subject and the available resources,

Hill does not adequately document his propositions. For example, in suggesting that religious involvement is a strength of Black families, he cites the historical role of the Black church in the lives of Blacks, but does not present empirical evidence which would tend to support his hypothesis that such involvement is, in fact, a strength. Hill recognizes this shortcoming by concluding that additional research is needed in this area.

Royce and Turner (1980) conducted a study in Dayton, Ohio to examine the strengths of Black families that had been identified by Hill (1972) and others. Using census tract data to identify those areas with the highest concentration of Blacks, they randomly selected 128 persons to be interviewed. Their findings tended to validate the family strengths identified by Hill and revealed other strengths as well, such as: (1) teaching children to respect themselves; (2) teaching children how to be happy; (3) stressing cooperation within the family; and (4) disciplining children.

Christopherson (1977) conducted a study in 1973 (updated in 1977 and 1978) which provides additional empirical evidence supportive of the propositions of Hill and others relative to the strengths of Black families. After interviewing 100 low-income Black persons in eight rural Oklahoma communities, he found that three strengths were prevalent: (1) a love for children; (2) a general acceptance of children born out of wedlock; and (3) a resilience which allowed them to cope with negative forces which impact upon the family, for example, poverty, crime, alcoholism, and so forth. Some of the variables included in the interview schedule focus on family and housing patterns, occupation,

education, ethnic perceptions, political participation, health, religion, and so forth.

Christopherson's study adds to the knowledge of family strengths in general and identifies strengths of low-income Black families in particular. It is limited, however, in that it focuses only on low-income Black families and does not include other groups within the Black community, for example, middle- and upper-income families. Consequently, generalizations to these latter groups should be made with great caution.

In another major study, Scanzoni (1971) examines economic resources and family outcomes relative to the majority of Black families, thus excluding the Black underclass. The information for this work was gathered in Indianapolis, Indiana by Black interviewers during the winter of 1968. Using a sample of 400 Black households which included both husband and wife, Scanzoni describes and analyzes relationships the respondents had as adolescents with their own parents and with other adults. He also explores linkages between these background experiences and the current social and economic position of the respondents, husband-wife interaction, and parental socialization.

The major factors which were found to contribute to the stability of Black families in this study were as follows: (1) economic and social advantages as well as employment opportunities provided by experiences in the city; (2) social status obtained from religious involvement, parental presence in the home, and the number of children; (3) the ability to provide economic, social, and educational resources for children in the family; (4) role models for children in the community (i.e., school teacher,

minister, etc.); (5) the quality of the husband-wife relationship; and (6) the level of interaction between parent and child.

Scanzoni's work is outstanding. He not only examines family strengths, but he also went a step further by focusing on the quality of family functioning as an indicator of family stability. In addition, his study adds to the available empirical research on the Black family. The study does have one major weakness in that it recognizes the family only as a husband-wife unit, thereby excluding single parent families which comprise a large proportion of Black families.

Otto (1962) conducted a study with white families similar in nature to Royce and Turner's work in that he attempts to examine what families consider their strengths to be. Twenty-seven (27)husband-wife headed families were asked to complete an open-ended Family Strength Questionnaire. Shared faith, religious, and moral values; love, consideration, and understanding; and common interests, goals, and purposes were mentioned most frequently as family strengths. An interesting observation is that in this study no economic factors were cited as family strengths.

Stinnett (1978) conducted a study of predominantly white strong/stable families in various Oklahoma counties. The Cooperative Extension Service in Oklahoma and the Home Economic Extension Service in each county were asked to recommend strong/stable families in the community using the following guidelines:

1. Families which demonstrated a high degree of marital happiness, parent-child satisfaction, and appeared to meet each other's needs as perceived by the Services, and

2. Families which were intact, that is, where both the husband and wife were present, and where at least one child was living at home.

One hundred and thirty (130) families were selected for the study. These families represented residents of both urban and rural communities; however, most of them were from rural counties. The respondents were interviewed and were given questionnaires which covered a broad range of factors. Questions were asked concerning their relationship patterns, how they dealt with conflict, how they communicated, and how they dealt with power structures.

The results of the study indicate that six qualities appear to be significant factors contributing to the strength and happiness of the families: appreciation, spending time together, good communication patterns, commitment, a high degree of religious orientation, and an ability to deal with crises in a positive manner.

Also contributing to our empirical knowledge of factors relating to Black family stability is Willie's (1976) study of instability and stability among the poor. He compares the similarities and differences between what he identifies as the "problem" family and the stable family living in the same low-rent public housing project in Syracuse, New York. All of the 92 respondents were identified by the housing manager. Fifty-two (52) were identified as "problem" families in need of immediate help and 40 were identified as stable families. The respondents

were similar in educational, occupational, and religious backgrounds. The majority of the respondents were Black. The results of the study indicate:

1. Problem families were different in structure than were stable families. That is, 48 percent of the problem families were female-headed, while 78 percent of the stable families were husband-wife.

2. Two-thirds of the husband-wife couples from the problem families had been married less than eight years, while one-half of the couples in the stable families had been married 13 years or more.

3. The majority of the mothers in the problem families tended to be young and the fathers were under 35 years old.

4. Thirty-nine (39) percent of the mothers in the problem families were brides before their 19th birthday, compared to 14 percent of the mothers in the stable families.

5. Problem families had an average of 3.9 children, while stable families had an average of 2.7 children.

Willie attributes the instability of the problem families to their absence of control, lack of commitment, and inadequate socialization for participation.

This selected review of the literature reveals those characteristics or attributes that have been theoretically presented (e.g., Billingsley, 1968; Hill, 1972) or empirically determined (e.g., Royce & Turner, 1980, Willie, 1976) to be indices of stability and strength in Black families.

To summarize, it has been suggested that the following traits are crucial in any definition of family stability and strength: (1) a strong economic base (stable employment, property ownership, a strong work orientation); (2) a high degree of religious orientation; (3) achievement orientation (educational attainment, educational aspiration and expectation); (4) adaptability of

family roles (the presence of a leader in the family, an ability to deal with crises in a positive manner, good communication patterns); and (5) strong kinship bonds (a high degree of commitment, appreciation, mutual obligations, helping networks and exchanges, spending time together). In addition, it was also found that the following factors may affect family strength and stability in Black communities: (1) the age of the family head; (2) the kind of family structure; (3) marital history and behavior; (4) socio-economic status; (5) family of orientation behavior; (6) family size; (7) social transactions (formal and informal); and (8) psychological attributes.

B. Objectives and Expectations

Conspicuously absent from the literature are studies that attempt to assess systematically the coping strategies of preidentified stable and strong Black families for pragmatic (program) purposes. The studies reported were usually conducted to refute the pervasive argument that Black families are prima facie weak and to identify those common characteristics or attributes that could be labeled as strong. A concentrated attempt to correlate functioning styles and problem resolution methods of Black families known to be stable and strong was needed.

The objectives of this study were as follows: (1) to determine the critical factors and conditions that contribute to strong Black family life; (2) to identify strategies employed by families in resolving the problems of living; (3) to add to the knowledge base on stable families that would enhance practice intervention with families that are in need of help; and (4) to

identify models of self-help strategies used by stable families. Questions to guide the research included the following: What are the barriers to family stability? What causes family stability? Why do people stay married? How do families solve problems? Does religion play a role in family stability? Where do family members go for help with the problems of living? Does marital instability lead to family instability? What is the relationship between family stability and family structure? What effect, if any, do demographic factors have on family stability? How does the psychological health of individual family members relate to family stability?

It was expected that the study would: (1) provide primary data on the conceptions of strength and stability from the community and family levels, (2) provide information on sources of problems and problem solvers as identified by persons who have had success in solving problems (an underlying assumption of this expectation was that strong families have experienced problems and that part of their strength derives from their successful resolution of problems), and (3) indicate that family structure variables neither preclude the occurrence of family strength nor change the nature of strengths found (i.e., similar strengths can be found in all family constellation patterns).

The significance of the study lies in its production of data which are useful for those interested in developing family enrichment programs for Black families based on the experiences of "successful" Black families, and for those interested in furthering theoretical and research efforts to understand the complex dynamics of the full range of Black family life.

Chapter III

Methodology

A. Overview

This section of the report describes the procedural details of the study. Specifically, the research design, study population and site, sample selection, instrumentation, data collection procedures, and the data analysis plan are presented. It should be noted that after extended staff discussions and consultations with experts in survey design, significant revisions in the original methodological plan were made. These revisions affected most extensively the sample selection process. In this chapter, the actual procedures used in the study are described.

B. Research Design

An exploratory, descriptive research design was used. The focus of the study was strengths and healthy functioning in Black families. The current state-of-the-art in Black family research does not allow one to with confidence propose a more experimentally based research design. There is still a need to document the source of problems and the particulars of family stability and strengths. Such documentation will provide a data base for understanding the dynamics of family stability and for developing strategies to improve the quality of family life in Black communities.

The methods of survey research, in general, guided the data collection procedures.

C. Study Population and Site

Since the overall intent of the study was to understand the dynamics of stable and strong Black families, the Black family population of interest, then, was necessarily that fraction of Black families who were strong and stable. Stable Black families in Washington, D.C. (or surrounding areas) constituted the study population. The population was confined to the local area due to time and financial constraints.

D. Sample Selection

Twenty-six (26) Black husband-wife and 24 Black single mother families were the study participants. Since family stability and strength were not assumed to be tied to marital stability and since female-headed households account for nearly 45 percent of Black families with children, it was decided that these two groups should be included in the sample. (It should, perhaps, be further noted that the project staff assumed that single mother-headed families were not, by definition, unstable.)

Selection and sampling criteria for the participating families were modified based on staff discussions and consultations with Dr. Neil Henry of Virginia Commonwealth University and Dr. Karen Petersen of American University. The modification affecting family participation was that the minimum length of the marriage and/or family togetherness was lowered from 12 years to 5 years. With the five-year minimum, it was possible to determine (with less built in bias) if the length of the marriage and/or family togetherness is associated with family stability and strength. The new minimum also allowed the study of stability and strengths at various points in family life, and a

wider range of parent and child ages. Furthermore, it was believed that birth, marital, and divorce patterns in the Black community need to be better explored before a rigid 12 year criterion was assumed. Fifty (50) families--25 husband-wife and 25 single mothers--were desired. A nomination strategy (with nominations solicited from varying community organizations) was selected as the most appropriate method of identifying families for participation in the study (similar to Willie, 1976 and Stinnett, 1978). The nomination strategy was believed to be capable of providing information on Black community standards and perceptions of those traits that characterize stable, strong Black families, thereby, expanding our knowledge of family stability and strength from a functional, community perspective. Receiving nominations from different organizations was also seen as a way of providing the project with a diverse group of families marked by varying personifications of strength and stability. For example, strong families recommended by a hospital might present a different profile than would families recommended by a civic association or elementary school. This diversity was expected to result in a pool of families which had experienced a wide range of stressors and problems, thereby greatly enhancing the project objective of studying coping strategies. In addition, the nomination strategy was considered to be the quickest and most cost efficient method of subject selection. This strategy allowed the project to concentrate only on families that were strong and stable by eliminating the need to screen out families which were inappropriate for the study.

A mail campaign was undertaken to solicit nominations from key or knowledgeable informants. Approximately 600 community organizations (e.g., public and private schools, churches, civic associations, neighborhood advisory commissions, hospitals, etc.) were sent a packet of information describing the project.

Specifically, letters were addressed to the heads of churches, schools, civic and neighborhood associations, service organizations, and property management offices located in the District of Columbia, soliciting their cooperation in conducting this study by identifying husband-wife and single female-headed families whom they felt best represented the strengths of Black families. The project's purposes, significance, and intended outcomes were explained both in ideological and practical terms. A list of the attributes of "strong" families identified in previous research also was enclosed. However, since their own perceptions were wanted as a means for further refinement of the definition of "strengths" in Black families, informants were encouraged to use their own criteria for selecting the families. In either case, they were asked to state their reasons for selecting the families they nominated.

Additional criteria were that the couple or single mother must have been the head of the household for at least the last five years, that each family nominated have at least one child under 18 years of age currently living in the household (although they could also have other relatives, or friends, living in the household), and that the family be a resident of the District of Columbia (although in three cases families lived in Maryland, just over the District line).

Given the restrictions imposed by the request for, in effect, superlative families, and the need for a quick response, the responses to the request were difficult to evaluate. Of the organizations to which letters were sent, 57 responded. Thirty-six (36, 63%) nominated 74 families; 13 (23%) made no nominations, but said they were interested in the project; and 8 (14%) were not interested or did not wish to participate.

More than two-thirds (71.5%) of the nominations came from churhes and schools: private and Catholic schools nominated 24.3 percent of the families, and college preparatory programs nominated 14.8 percent of the families. The number of nominations by churches matched the number of nominations made by private and Catholic schools. Public schools provided 8.6 percent of the nominations.

The following reasons were given by organizations for not wishing to participate in the nomination process: (1) the presence of few American Black families in the immediate area; (2) the organization did not serve families living in the District of Columbia; (3) the agency dealt only with individuals; (4) the agency/organization had no resources or information to contribute, or was restricted by rules of confidentiality.

Fifty-six (56) letters were returned by the Post Office. Subsequent telephone follow-up with a randomly selected group of organizations revealed that, in addition to the usual problems associated with mailed requests, such as procrastination, lost forms, the urgency of everyday matters, and so on, the following were major response depression factors:

1. Letters were received after schools, churches, and organizations had suspended normal operations for the summer, and there was no one available who was authorized to make either the selection or to convene the appropriate body responsible for evaluating such requests.

2. The addressee and/or some other key individual was not available and other staff left the mail unopened.

3. There were changes in personnel and/or organizational structure and correspondence was neither forwarded nor opened.

4. Ministers and other key individuals returning from vacation several weeks after the deadline assumed it was too late to make nominations.

5. There was some misunderstanding about or lack of interest in the project's intents by a few persons contacted.

E. Instrumentation

In accordance with the objectives of the study, an instrument was developed that assessed those traits postulated to be characteristic of family stability and strength. Major areas measured included economic conditions, religious orientation, communication patterns, and family roles. In addition, particular attention was focused on assessing indicants of psychological health and coping mechanisms.

A questionnaire containing both open- and closed-ended questions was constructed. It was divided into seven content areas. Each area is described below:

1. Demographic information

Standard socio-demographic information such as age, income, occupation, education, number of children, and home ownership was ascertained.

2. Networks and social participation

Several studies have shown that social networks provide significant support to persons in the family unit (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Gourash, 1978; Powell, 1980; Stack, 1974). Social networks may be defined as attachments and relationships between two or more persons where there are meaningful exchanges. A person's social network may be comprised of relatives, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and fellow church members. It was assumed that strong families have a range of social networks within which individual family members interact. The interview schedule contained a variety of items which dealt with networks such as the number of friends, how often one visits friends, whether friends or co-workers help with certain problems, the frequency of contact with relatives, the types of exchanges, and satisfaction with network size and exchanges.

It was also assumed that persons who are part of strong, stable family units will be involved in formal organizations, that is, they will tend to be members of voluntary associations, to participate actively in the political process, and to be active in a variety of social clubs and associations. A vast amount of empirical and theoretical research has been published on social participation in Black communities, including voluntary associations and clubs, and political activities (Knoke & Thomas, 1977, Ross & Wheeler, 1971; Warren, 1975; Yearwood, 1980). In order to obtain information for this variable, questions such as the following were asked: Do you belong to any organizations? If so, name them. Do you hold an office in any of these groups? How

satisfied are you with your overall participation in these groups? Are you a registered voter?

3. Daily life

It was speculated that the organization and efficiency of household chores and responsibilities might be important corollaries of family stability and strength. Therefore, household responsibilities were indexed by the type of chore and the person responsible for handling that chore, household members' talents and skills were inventoried, and satisfaction with the routine of the household was assessed.

4. About me

This section gathered information on the respondents' childhood, general habits (e.g., smoking), hobbies, problems experienced, problem solving strategies, satisfaction with life, religiosity, stressful life events, depression, and general health.

Stressful life events were measured by a scale developed by Holmes and Rahe (1967). The original scale of 46 items was modified and reduced to 25 items.

Religiosity was measured by a multidimensional scale developed by researchers Kenny, Cromwell and Vaughan (1977). It includes measures of religious belief, attitudes, and practice.

Depression, or more accurately depressive symptomatology, was measured by means of the Center for Epidemiologic Studies' Depression Scale (CES-D).

5. Racial identity

Questions on racial awareness and attitudes were measured, including an assessment of the respondents' perceptions of the effects of racism on various dimensions of their lives.

6. About your spouse

Questions were asked concerning marital difficulties, ways spouses solve problems, and perceptions of their marital partner and role.

7. About your child

Questions were asked about the problems experienced with children, the respondents' perceptions of the child, and methods used to discipline and reward children. These questions focused on two children in the household -- the oldest child and the youngest child of the opposite sex. If all children were of the same sex, the questions focused on the oldest child and the youngest child.

8. About your family

Assessments of the family as a cohesive unit were made in this section. Respondents' perceptions of common family problems, strengths, and practices were obtained. The Family Environment Scale (Moos, 1974) was used to measure 10 dimensions of family life: achievement orientation, moral-religious emphasis, intellectual-cultural orientation, active recreational orientation, independence, cohesion, expressiveness, conflict, organization, and control. The scale was selected because of its ease of administration, its reliability, and its validity.

9. Interviewer checklist

At the end of each questionnaire, interviewers were asked to evaluate the interview process, including their perceptions of the respondent's cooperation, areas of difficulty, and the absence or presence of Black art or literature in the house.

The first draft of the questionnaire was internally reviewed by staff members of the Institute. Revisions were made based on their comments.

F. Data Collection

Once nominations were received from the organizations, individual interviews with wives, husbands, and single mothers were scheduled through telephone contact. Therefore, while 50 families comprised the sample, 76 interviews (i.e., 26 wives, 26 husbands, and 24 single women) were conducted.

Staff members and other experienced interviewers administered the questionnaire. Outside interviewers were individually oriented to the objectives of the study and the use of the questionnaire.

Interviewers and respondents were matched by race and sex. Each interview took from approximately 2-3 hours to complete. Respondents were paid $20.00 for a completed interview.

All requirements for using human subjects as prescribed by the University's Institutional Review Board were met. There were no risks involved in participating in this study.

An interviewer debriefing session was held after the interviews were completed. Interviewers were asked to provide written (an evaluation form was devised) and oral comments on the study and specifically on the instrument and interviewing

procedures. Further, they were asked to give their perceptions of future research endeavors based on their experiences with the project.

G. Data Analysis

A coding manual was constructed, and data were coded as interviews were completed. The data were cleaned and edited.

The establishment of general patterns of stability and strengths and modes of coping was the desired outcome of this project. The testing of hypotheses was not. Therefore, analyses that provided descriptions of the data were considered most appropriate. Frequency counts, percentages, modes, means, and scale scores, where appropriate, were computed. Efforts were made to examine and combine information carefully to yield perspectives that would be beneficial to programs and future hypothesis based research endeavors. However, limited inferential statistical techniques (i.e., t-test and analysis of variance) were used to interpret differences found within the sample on factors (usually scale scores) or to produce a clearer picture of the factors impinging on subgroups of the sample.

Chapter IV

Results

In order to present the findings in the most coherent and cohesive manner, it was decided to use the study's two research specific objectives as anchor points. They are as follows: (1) to determine the critical factors and conditions that contribute to strong Black family life, and (2) to identify strategies employed by Black families in resolving problems of living. Objectives three (to add to the knowledge base) and four (to identify models of self-help strategies) imply programmatic activities to be implemented once the data were analyzed. The data in almost all cases are presented by marital status and sex (i.e., married women, married men, and single women).

I. To determine the critical factors and conditions that contribute to strong Black family life.

Data that pertain to the first objective are grouped under four major categories. They are as follows: (1) Perceptions by self and others, (2) Socio-demographic and family of orientation profile, (3) Family functioning, and (4) Individual social-psychological factors.

A. Perceptions by Self and Others

There were three sources of data on the perceptions of strength and stability in Black families. They were the respondents themselves, the community organizations that nominated families participating in this study, and the interviewers' assessments of the families they interviewed.

1. Community organizations

Community informants were asked to state the reasons they nominated the families referred for study participation. They had been provided with a list of attributes (characteristics of stable, strong families compiled from the literature) they could use as criteria to select families, and they were encouraged to use criteria of their own. Most of the informants appeared to refer to the list of attributes and supplied their own assessments. Reasons cited for nominations are given in Table 1. The most common reasons were that the families displayed strong kinship bonds, achievement orientation, parenting skills or parent-child relations, religious/philosophical orientation, intellectual - cultural orientation, and ability to deal with crises. It is interesting to note that female-headed families were twice as likely as were husband-wife families to be cited because of their ability to deal with crises. Husband-wife families were more likely than were female-headed families to be nominated because of their love, kindness, compassion and their ability to be supportive and caring.

2. Interviewers' assessment

Interviewers were asked to share their impressions of the persons they interviewed. All 14 interviewers had experience in human services disciplines and most had graduate degrees or training in social work or psychology; therefore, their impressions were not naive. Most frequently mentioned were the similarities among all families in traits such as having clearly defined roles, religious orientation, and genuinely caring for

Table 1

Characteristics Cited by Informant-Organizations in Identifying Stable Black Families

(36 Organizations, 74 Families)

Characteristics	Frequency Cited		
	Husband-wife	Female Head	Total
Strong Kinship Bonds	24	16	40
Strong Achievement Orientation	14	15	34
Parenting Skills, Parent-Child Relations	16	18	34
Strong Religious-Philosophical Orientation	12	12	24
Intellectual-Cultural Orientation	12	11	23
Ability to Deal with Crises	7	16	23
Strong Work Orientation	10	9	19
Independence	6	8	14
Organization	7	6	13
Active Recreational Orientation	5	7	12
Appreciation for Each Other	8	4	10
Adaptability of Family Roles	6	4	10
Self-Expression	5	5	10
Love, Kindness, Compassion	9	1	10
Supportive, Caring	7	2	9
Fit Characteristics in List Sent with Letter	7	2	9
Positive Response to Disabled/ Handicapped Family Members	3	5	8
Conflict Resolution	3	4	7
Quality/Length of Marriage	5	0	5
No Reason Given	3	2	5

Multiple reasons were cited by each organization.

NOTE: Some organizations that used the list of characteristics enclosed in our letter either listed additional traits or selected specific traits from the list.

each other. Also noted was their great enthusiasm for life, high self-esteem, pride in their own accomplishments and those of Black people generally, and the ability to manage and maintain orderliness in their lives over extended periods of time. The interviewers also reported that the single mothers, in particular, were eager to talk about their lives. Some, in fact, volunteered additional information during the interview and continued discussions past the conclusion of the rather lengthy interview.

3. Self-perceptions

Respondents were asked to list the strengths of their families and the common strengths of Black families, in general. The most frequently cited strength of their own families was a sense of family unity (indicated by 50% or more of the married women and men and single women). Married women's next most frequent responses were love, religion, sharing responsibilities, support, and coping strategies (18%, 15%, 10%, 8% and 8%, respectively, of their total number of responses). Married men indicated that love (23% of their total responses) was the next most prevalent strength in their families, followed by religion, support, and sharing responsibilities (each equally comprising 14% of the responses). Single women's next most frequently cited strengths were love, sharing responsibilities (each comprised 20% of the responses), religion, and support (each comprised 20% of the responses), and coping strategies (7% of the responses). (See Table 2.) There appeared to be few differences between the married men and women and the single women in their perceptions of their families' strengths; however, single women named slightly more strengths than did married women or men, single women were

Table 2

Perceived Strengths of Black Families

Strengths	Married Women N	Married Women %*	Married Men N	Married Men %*	Single Women N	Single Women %*
a. Common Strengths of Black Families						
Family Unity	13	33	11	33	13	28
Religion	8	20	11	33	9	20
Love	7	19	3	9	7	15
Coping Strategies	6	15	1	3	9	20
Support	4	10	4	12	5	11
Sharing Responsibilities	2	5	3	9	4	9
b. Strengths in Respondent's Family						
Family Unity	16	41	15	43	12	29
Love	7	18	8	23	8	20
Religion	6	15	4	11	5	12
Sharing Responsibilities	4	10	4	11	8	20
Support	3	8	4	11	5	12
Coping Strategies	3	8	-	-	3	7

*Percentages are based on the total number of responses given to the question.

twice as likely to list sharing responsibilities as a strength (8 single women in comparison to 4 married men and 4 married women), and men never listed coping strategies as a strength of their families.

When asked to indicate the "most important things about the way your immediate family gets along with each other," all the respondents agreed that helping and supporting each other, communication, respect, love, concern, and family unity were important. Men also indicated that trust and honesty were important, and in comparison to all women, men were more likely to state that respect was important (12 men, 46.2% of the men, in comparison to 7 single women, 29.2%, and 6 married women, 23.1%, or 26.0% of all women). Women were more likely than were men to list helping and supporting as an important dynamic (11 single women and 10 married women in comparison to 6 married men).

Respondents were also asked to identify the common strengths of Black families, in general, and to compare their families with other Black and white families. Their pattern of responses paralleled the responses they listed as the strengths in their own families. Namely, family unity was the most frequent response followed by religion, love, support, coping strategies, and sharing responsibilities. Respondents more often stated that religion and coping strategies were strengths in Black families, in general, rather than in their own families, in particular. They less frequently indicated, in comparison to their own families, that sharing responsibilities was a common strength of Black families generally. (See Table 2.)

More than half of the married women and men (n=15, 57.7% and n=14, 53.8%, respectively) and about 40 percent (n=10, 41.7%) of the single women said they believed that their families were about the same as other Black families. Most based this assessment on the belief that they were average, no better or worse than other Black families, and that their values and/or lifestyles were about the same as were those of other Black families. About one quarter of the married men and women (n=7, 26.9% for both married men and women) and one-third of the single women (n=8, 33.3%) said they believed that their families were much better than were other Black families. Reasons stated for this view included family communication, values, finances, unity, and love. (The frequency of these responses was quite low.) The other respondents said they believed that their families were a little better than were other Black families for reasons identical to those listed by respondents indicating that their families were much better than were other Black families. Only one respondent, a married woman, said she believed that her family was worse than was any other Black family.

In comparison to white families, the same pattern held as when respondents compared themselves to Black families. Three married men said they believed that their families were a little worse in comparison to white families. They gave racial factors, financial achievements, and family stability and unity as reasons for their rating.

B. Socio-Demographic and Family of Orientation Profile

Information on the respondents' current socio-demographic background is presented first, followed by data pertaining to

their childhood home/family characteristics (Family of Orientation).

1. Socio-demographic profile

a) Couples

(Table 3 presents selected background characteristics on the sample.) Over half of the couples (n=14, 53.6%) had been married for 20 years or more. Four couples had been married for 10 years or less, and 4 had been married for 30 years or more. The modal group (n=7) had been married for 20 to 24 years. Forty-two (42) percent (n=11) of the women were married before the age of 21, compared to 23 percent (n=6) of the men. Only 2 women and 6 men reported that they married at the age of 30 or older. The respondents' current modal age groups were 35 to 39 years and 50 to 54 years for the wives (n=7, 26.80% for each) and 35 to 39 years (n=6, 23.0%) for the husbands. Most of the respondents are in stable first marriages. Only 3 women (11.5%) and 4 men (15.2%) reported that they have been married before. Most couples had 2 children, but nearly 40 percent had more than 2 children. Only 2 (7.7%) married women saw themselves as the head of the household, in comparison to 12 (46.2%) married men who saw themselves as household heads. No man stated that his wife was head of the household, although 15 women stated that their husbands were household heads. Husbands were more likely than were wives (14 to 9) to state that both husband and wife were joint household heads.

With regard to education, 2 (7.7%) of the wives and 1 (3.8%) of the husbands did not complete high school; 8 each of the wives and husbands (30.8% each) completed high school; 10 (38.5%) wives

Table 3

Selected Background Characteristics by Marital Status and Sex, Stable Black Families

Characteristic	Married Men N	Married Men %	Single Women N	Single Women %
a. Marital History				
Never married	-	-	4	16.7
Separated	-	-	2	8.3
Divorced	3	11.5	13	54.2
Widowed	-	-	5	20.8
Previously married-no other information	-	-	-	-
b. Years Married				
Less than 10	4	15.2	-	-
10 - 14	2	7.6	-	-
15 - 19	6	22.9	-	-
20 - 24	7	26.9	-	-
25 - 29	3	11.5	-	-
30 - 35	4	15.2	-	-
c. Age When Married (current marriage)				
Under 21	11	42.2	6	23.0
21 - 24	5	19.1	4	15.3
25 - 29	8	30.7	9	34.5
30 and over	2	7.6	6	23.0
d. Current Age				
30 - 34	3	11.5	2	7.6
35 - 39	7	26.8	6	23.0
40 - 44	4	15.3	4	15.3
45 - 49	3	11.4	5	19.2
50 - 54	7	26.8	5	19.2
55 - 59	-	-	2	7.6
60 and over	1	3.8	2	7.6
e. Schooling Completed				
Elementary	2	7.7	1	3.8
High School	8	30.8	8	30.8
College	10	38.5	8	30.8
Graduate School	6	23.1	9	34.6

Table 3 (cont'd)

Selected Background Characteristics by Marital Status and Sex, Stable Black Families

Characteristic	Married Women N	Married Women %	Married Men N	Married Men %	Single Women N	Single Women %
f. Employment Status						
Employed	22	84.6	25	96.2	22	91.7
Unemployed	4	15.4	1	3.8	2	8.3
g. Occupation						
Professional-Technical	9	34.6	13	50.0	11	45.8
Manager-administrator	2	7.7	3	11.5	1	4.2
Sales	1	3.8	-	-	-	-
Clerical	6	23.1	6	23.1	9	37.5
Craftsman	1	3.8	3	11.5	-	-
Operatives	1	3.8	-	-	-	-
Transport operatives	1	3.8	-	-	-	-
Health workers	1	3.8	-	-	1	4.2
House work	1	3.8	-	-	-	-
Cleaning/Food worker					1	4.2
Not applicable	2	7.7	1	3.8	1	4.2
h. Selected Additional Income from:						
Second job	6	23.1	8	30.8	8	33.3
Interest	5	19.2	16	61.5	5	20.8
Rental property	3	11.5	5	19.2	1	4.2
Consultant/ other services	8	30.7	9	34.6	5	20.8
i. Number of Children						
1	4	15.4	4	15.4	8	33.3
2	10	38.5	8	30.8	5	20.8
3	4	15.4	5	19.2	5	20.8
4	5	19.2	6	23.1	3	12.5
5	2	7.7	2	7.7	1	4.2
6 or more	1	3.8	1	3.8	2	8.4
j. Home Ownership						
Own	24	92.3	-	-	11	45.8
Rent	2	7.7	-	-	13	54.2

Table 3 (cont'd)

Selected Background Characteristics by Marital Status and Sex, Stable Black Families

Characteristic	Married Women N	Married Women %	Married Men N	Married Men %	Single Women N	Single Women %
k. Length of Time at Present Address*						
Under 5 years	5	19.1	-	-	8	33.4
5 - 9 years	6	22.9	-	-	9	37.5
10 - 14 years	7	26.8	-	-	4	16.7
15 - 19 years	2	7.7	-	-	2	8.4
20 - 24 years	5	19.1	-	-	-	-
25 years or more	1	3.8	-	-	1	4.2
l. Head of Household						
Respondent	2	7.7	12	46.2	24	100.0
Spouse	15	57.7	-	-	-	-
Both	9	34.6	14	53.8	-	-

*The responses of the wives were used for the couples' reports.

and 8 (30.8%) husbands completed college; and 6 (23.1%) wives and 9 (34.6%) husbands completed graduate programs. There was little difference between wives and husbands in the amount of formal education received.

The overwhelming majority of husbands (96.2%) and wives (84.6%) worked outside the home. Only 1 man and 4 women were not employed. Over 70 percent of the men were employed in either professional/technical jobs (50.0%) or clerical positions (23.1%). Another 11.5 percent of the men were managers or administrators. There were 3 male craftsmen. The wives' occupations varied more than did those of the husbands. They were spread over 10 occupational fields in comparison to 4 for the husbands. More wives were employed in professional-technical (n=9, 34.6%) and clerical (n=6, 23.1%) positions than in any other fields. (See Table 3.)

The modal income group for married women was $25,000-29,999 per-year (n=6, 23.1%). For husbands, the modal income group was $35,000 or more (n=6, 23.1%). Nearly 70 percent of the wives and over 90 percent of the husbands made $17,000 or more in personal income. Husbands' and wives' reports of total household income varied slightly. Husbands tended to report higher incomes than did wives. The source of the discrepancies is not known. At any rate, the majority of wives and husbands (n=15, 57.7% and n=18, 69.2%, respectively) agreed that their total household income was $30,000 or more. Fewer than 25 percent by wives' account and 15 percent by husbands' account reported household incomes of less than $17,000. (See Table 4 for income data.) In addition, married men and married women had sources of additional income.

Table 4

Personal and Total Household Yearly Income by Marital Status and Sex, Stable Black Families Study

Income in Dollars	Personal						Total Household					
	Married				Single		Married				Single	
	Women		Men		Women		Women		Men		Women	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
None	1	3.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Under - 3,999	1	3.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4 - 7,999	2	7.7	1	3.8	3	12.5	2	7.7	1	3.8	5	20.8
8 - 10,999	-	-	-	-	3	12.5	-	-	-	-	-	-
11 - 13,999	-	-	1	3.8	1	4.2	4	15.4	2	7.7	1	4.2
14 - 16,999	4	15.4	1	3.8	4	16.7	-	-	-	-	2	8.3
17 - 19,999	5	19.2	3	11.5	2	8.3	1	3.8	2	7.7	3	12.5
20 - 24,999	2	7.7	5	19.2	5	20.8	1	3.8	-	-	4	16.7
25 - 29,999	6	23.1	3	11.5	3	12.5	1	3.8	3	11.5	4	16.7
30 - 34,999	3	11.5	5	19.2	1	4.2	3	11.5	1	3.8	1	4.2
35 and over	1	3.8	6	23.1	1	4.2	12	46.2	17	65.4	2	8.3
No response	1	3.8	1	3.8	1	4.2	2	7.7	-	-	2	8.3

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Most often as indicated in Table 3, extra income came from interest earned (19.2% for wives and 61.5% for men) or a second job (23.1% for wives and 30.8% for men).

Most couples had lived at their present address for more than five years (over 80%) and owned their own homes (over 90%). The majority of the couples maintain nuclear households (70%). (See Table 5.)

b) Single women

The single women were, for the most part, divorced (n=13, 54.2%) women. Only 4 had never been married. Two (2) were separated and 5 were widowed. Most were 35 to 39 years of age (n=10, 41.7%). Over 60 percent were under 40 years old. Eight (8) of the women had one child (the modal number) and one had 13. Twenty-nine percent had finished college, and one-fourth had finished graduate school, while 41.7 percent had completed high school. Only 1 single woman head of household had completed only elementary school. Over 90 percent (n=22) were employed -- most in professional-technical (n=11, 45.8%) or clerical (n=9, 37.5%) positions. Unlike the married women, they did not tend to be as spread out in occupational fields. (See Table 3.)

About 45 percent of the single women made under $17,000 per year and over 20 percent made over $25,000 per year. (See Table 4.) Their income was supplemented by second jobs (n=8, 33.3%) and other sources of revenue, as indicated in Table 3. Eight (8) (33.4%) of the women lived at their present address for under 5 years. Over half (n=13, 54.2%) rented their homes. (See Tables 3 and 4.) Most (n=16, 66.7%) lived in nuclear family households. (See Table 5).

Table 5

Family Constellation Variables by Marital Status and Sex, Stable Black Families

Family Variables	Married Women N	Married Women %	Married Men N	Married Men %	Single Women N	Single Women %
a. Current Household Configuration						
Nuclear	21	80.8	18	69.2	16	66.7
Extended	5	19.1	8	30.8	7	29.2
b. Childhood Household Configuration						
Nuclear	9	34.6	15	57.7	16	66.7
Extended	16	61.5	11	42.3	7	29.2
c. Sibling Configuration						
Number having older sibs of same sex	13	50.0	10	38.5	15	62.5
Number having older sibs of opposite sex	16	61.5	17	65.4	19	79.2

2. Family of orientation

a) Married women

Two-thirds of the married women were not born in Washington, D.C. (the study site), and 70 percent were reared outside of Washington, D.C. Over 61 percent (n=16) had lived with both parents, and 23 percent (n=6) had lived with their mothers only. Five (5 or 11.5%) had no brothers and 7 (26.9%) had no sisters. Half (n=13) were the oldest female sibling (that is, they had no older sisters) and 10 (38.5%) had no older brothers. (See Table 5.) Sixteen (16, 61.5%) of them lived in extended households. The majority of the wives (based on a response rate of 20) had mothers who worked outside the home (n=16, 61.5%), of whom 11 were household workers and 5 were employed in professional-technical occupations. Four (4) of the wives reported that their mothers were housewives. The fathers of the wives (based on a response rate of 16) were employed as craftsmen (n=5, 19.2%), managers or administrators (n=4, 15.4%), farmers (n=4, 15.4%), or clerical workers (n=3, 11.5%).

b) Married men

The majority of the men were born and reared outside of Washington, D.C. (66.2% and 61.5%, respectively). Nearly 70 percent (n=18) of them lived with both parents -- the others lived with their mothers (n=4, 15.4%) or a grandparent (n=4, 15.4%). Seven (7, 26.9%) had no brothers and 4 (15.4%) had no sisters. Nine (9, 34.6%) had no older sisters and 16 (61.5%) were the oldest male sibling (that is, they had no older brothers.) Eleven (11, 42.3%) of the married men lived in extended households as children. Of 16 respondents, 11 reported that their mothers

worked and 5 stated that their mothers were housewives. Of those who worked, 7 (26.9%) were household workers and 4 (15.4%) were professional-technical workers. Their fathers (based on a response rate of 12) were employed as professional-technical workers (n=4, 15.4%), craftsmen (n=4, 15.4%), or farmers (n=3, 11.5%).

c) Single women

Of the single women, 13 (54.2%) were born outside of Washington, D.C. and 11 (45.8%) spent their childhood outside of Washington. Nearly 80 percent (n=19) lived with both parents. Three (3, 12.5%) lived with their mothers. Six (6, 25.0%) had no sisters and 5 (20.8%) had no brothers. Over one-third (n=9) had no older sisters and over 20 percent (n=5) had no older brothers. Seven (29.2%) lived in extended families. Of 15 respondents, 9 reported that their mothers worked either as household workers (n=6, 25.0%) or professional-technical workers (n=3, 12.5%). Six (25.0%) reported that their mothers were housewives. The single women's fathers (based on 19 responses) were employed as transport operatives (n=6, 16.7%), farmers (n=4, 16.7%), professional-technical workers (n=3, 12.5%), craftsmen (n=3, 12.5%), or laborers (n=3, 12.5%).

C. Family Functioning

Family functioning refers to the way the members of the family function as a group and the daily routine of family life. In addition to obtaining information on family functioning, information was obtained on talents and skills possessed by members of the family.

1. **Family environment**

The Family Environment Scale (FES), comprised of ten subscales, was used to measure the social environmental characteristics of the families. The FES's 10 subscales measure 3 dimensions of behavior--relationships, personal growth, and system maintenance (see Table 6). The relationship dimension is measured by the subscales cohesion, expressiveness, and conflict. The subscales independence, achievement orientation, intellectual-cultural orientation, active-recreational orientation, and moral-religious emphasis measure the personal growth dimension. The system maintenance dimension is assessed by the subscales organization and control. Each subscale is measured by 9 statements. Respondents are asked to indicate if the statement is more "true" of their families or more "false." The range of possible scores for each subscale, then, is 0 to 9. A higher score indicates a positive rating on the dimension, except for the conflict subscale where a lower score indicates less familial conflict.

The following are the FES results for the families in this study. For interpretational assistance, their scores are compared against the scores of a group of single parents and a group of Black and Mexican-American families reported by Moos and Moos (1981), the developers of the scale. Differences were not analyzed for statistical significance.

Table 6

Family Environment Scale
Subscales and Dimension Descriptions

	Relationship Dimensions	
1.	**Cohesion**	the degree of commitment, help, and support family members provide for one another
2.	**Expressiveness**	the extent to which family members are encouraged to act openly and to express their feelings directly
3.	**Conflict**	the amount of openly expressed anger, aggression, and conflict among family members
	Personal Growth Dimensions	
4.	**Independence**	the extent to which family members are assertive, are self-sufficient, and make their own decisions
5.	**Achievement Orientation**	the extent to which activities (such as school and work) are cast into an achievement-oriented or competitive framework
6.	**Intellectual-Cultural Orientation**	the degree of interest in political, social, intellectual, and cultural activities
7.	**Active-Recreational Orientation**	the extent of participation in social and recreational activities
8.	**Moral-Religious Emphasis**	the degree of emphasis on ethical and religious issues and values
	System Maintenance Dimensions	
9.	**Organization**	the degree of importance of clear organization and structure in planning family activities and responsibilities
10.	**Control**	the extent to which set rules and procedures are used to run family life

Source: Moos, R., & Moos, B. Family environment scale manual. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc., 1981, p. 2.

a) Within group findings

Overall, all the families scored above the mean scale score of 4.5 (and below the mean scale score in the case of conflict). (See Table 7.) The highest mean scores reported by husbands, wives, and single women were for the moral-religious emphasis subscale (7.68, 7.04, and 7.63, respectively). Likewise, husbands, wives, and single women all scored lower on the control subscale (4.69, 5.04, and 5.67, respectively). There appeared to be minor differences between married men, married women, and single women in the mean scores, although married women tended to score slightly lower on most subscales in comparison to both their husbands and single women. The exceptions were in the cases of independence, active-recreational orientation, and control.

On the relationship orientation subscales, married men scored higher on the average on cohesion (7.67) and single women on expressiveness (6.04). The lowest conflict subscale mean was found among the married women (1.88). Of the 5 personal growth subscales, single women had high subscale mean scores for 3 of the subscales--achievement orientation, intellectual-cultural orientation, and active-recreational orientation -- and married men had higher subscale mean scores for the other 2--independence and moral-religious emphasis (see Table 7). The highest subscale means for organization and control of the system maintenance dimension were found among single women (7.08 and 5.67, respectively).

b) Comparison group differences

In comparison to the single parent and Black/Mexican-American families, married couples who participated in this study scored

Table 7

Subscale Means for Stable Black Families
and Subsample Families

Subscales	Black Stable Families				Subsample Families*	
	Married Couples N=26	Married Men N=26	Married Women N=26	Single Women N=24	Single Parent N=81	Black and Mexican-American N=179
Cohesion	7.26	7.67	6.88	7.17	6.24	6.61
Expressiveness	5.50	5.80	5.20	6.04	5.45	4.36
Conflict	2.30	2.72	1.88	2.00	4.28	3.30
Independence	7.08	7.17	7.00	6.96	6.58	5.96
Achievement Orientation	6.20	6.46	5.96	6.92	5.47	6.37
Intellectual-Recreational Orientation	6.06	6.21	5.92	6.87	5.61	5.10
Active-Recreational Orientation	5.96	5.87	6.04	6.67	5.61	5.03
Moral-Religious Emphasis	7.35	7.68	7.04	7.63	4.06	5.99
Organization	6.25	6.58	5.92	7.08	4.99	5.98
Control	4.87	4.69	5.04	5.67	4.22	4.95

*Note: See Moos, R., & Moos, B. Family environment scale manual. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc., 1981, p. 44.

higher (more positively) on all subscales except 2 -- Blacks and Mexican Americans in the Moos and Moos (1981) study scored slightly higher on control and achievement orientation. (See Table 7.)

Married men -- in comparison to the single parent and Black and Mexican-American groups -- scored higher (more positively) on every subscale except control, where Blacks and Mexican Americans scored slightly higher (a .26 difference).

Married women scored higher than did the single parent and Black and Mexican-American comparison groups on all subscales except 3. In comparison to the Black and Mexican-American groups, married women scored slightly lower on achievement orientation and organization, and in comparison to the single parent group, married women scored lower on expressiveness.

Single women scored higher (more positively) on every subscale in comparison to the single parent and Black and Mexican-American groups.

2. Daily routine

Daily routine was assessed by determining the division of labor for 16 chores and asking the respondents if housework interfered with other responsibilities or caused them to feel overworked. They were also asked what was most important in keeping the household functioning smoothly and what, if anything, they would change about their everyday routine.

a) Married women

Of the 16 chores about which the wives were asked, married women reported that the majority of the time they were responsible for shopping for clothes for the family (n=19, 73.1%), sewing or

mending (n=18, 72.0%), cooking (n=17, 65.4%), washing clothes (n=16, 61.5%), ironing clothes (n=14, 53.8%), shopping for food (n=13, 50.0%), and buying furniture or major appliances (n=12, 48.0%). They never had sole responsibility for taking out the trash or doing yard work and almost never had sole responsibility for washing the car or taking care of a pet (each of these chores was done most of the time by only 2 wives). The married women perceived that their husbands were usually responsible for 2 chores -- the yard work (n=16, 61.5%) and calling repairmen (n=15, 57.7%). Wives reported that they and their spouses frequently shared responsibilities for buying furniture and taking care of the children (n=11, 44.0% for each). They reported that either children, the spouse and children, or everyone in the household was mostly responsible for taking out the trash (n=13, 50%) and frequently responsible for washing the car (n=11, 44.0%).

Sixteen (16, 61.5%) of the women reported that they felt overworked because of all the things they had to do. Nine (9, 34.6%) of the women said that housework kept them away from doing other things only a little; another 34.5 percent claimed that housework sometimes prevented them from doing other things; and 2 women reported that housework interfered with other things they wanted to do a great deal of the time. Six (6) women reported that housework never interfered with other activities.

Sixteen (16, 61.5%) of the women also reported that there were things about their everyday routine that they would like to change. Some of the changes the women stated they would make include better management of their time, more flexibility in their schedule, more recreational activities, less housework, and a

better distribution of labor among family members. When asked what they felt was the most important factor in keeping the household functioning smoothly, the married women's most frequent response was family unity (n=8%), followed by organization (n=7), and communication (n=5).

b) Married men

The married men's reports about responsibilities for chores varied from the perceptions of their wives. They saw themselves as being primarily responsible for 3 chores -- calling the repairmen (n=15, 57.7%), washing the car (n=13, 50%), and taking out the trash (n=12, 46.2%). Husbands reported that their wives were usually responsible for cooking (n=18, 69.2%), clothes shopping (n=14, 53.8%), washing clothes (n=13, 50.0%), and ironing clothes (n=12, 46.2%). Husbands reported that they and their spouses were, for the most part, jointly responsible for taking care of the children (n=17, 65.4%), buying furniture or major appliances (n=17, 65.4%), shopping for food (n=13, 50%), managing the family budget (n=12, 46.2%), and running errands (n=12, 46.2%). They never saw themselves as primarily responsible for general housework, shopping for clothes, or taking care of the children, and they almost never saw themselves as responsible for cooking (n=2), washing clothes (n=2), taking care of a pet (n=3), or ironing clothes (n=2). They never saw their wives as being primarily responsible for taking care of a pet, taking out the trash, doing yard work, or running errands, and almost never saw them as primarily responsible for washing the car (n=2), or calling repairmen (n=3).

Eight (8) men said that housework did not keep them from doing other things. Ten (10) men reported that housework kept them from doing other things only a little, while 7 men said it kept them from doing things sometimes. Only (1) one man said that housework kept him from doing other things a great deal. Twelve (12) men said that they felt overworked from all the things they had to do.

When the men were asked if there were things they would like to change about their everyday life, 14 men responded "yes." Some of the things mentioned were better time management (n=5), more recreational activities (n=2), less housework (n=2), better distribution of labor among family members (n=2), a change in responsibility towards the family (n=1), and more flexibility (n=1).

When the men were asked what they thought were the most important factors in keeping the household functioning smoothly, the most frequent responses were family unity (n=7), communication (n=6), organization (n=5), and money management (n=4).

c. Single women

As might be expected, single women reported that they were primarily responsible for almost all the chores listed. The chores for which they did not have responsibility the majority of the time were taking care of the pet (n=2), taking out the trash (n=3), ironing clothes (n=7), and running errands (n=6). Except for taking out the trash (which was most usually a child's responsibility), mothers and children performed the other chores jointly.

Most of the single women reported that housework kept them from doing other things only a little or not at all (n=10, 41.7%), each. Four (4 or 16.7%) of the women reported that housework kept them from doing other things some of the time. Fifteen (15 or 62.5%) of the single women interviewed said that in general they feel overworked because of all the things they have to do.

The response most frequently given by single mothers to the question concerning the most important factor in keeping the household functioning smoothly was organization. Seven (7, 29.2%) of the women said a house must be organized in order to run smoothly. The next most frequent responses were communication (n=4, 16.7%), family unity and money management (n=3, 12.5% each). Other less frequent responses (cited one each) were respect, love, and effectiveness.

3. Talents and skills

Talents and skills were assessed by asking respondents to indicate if any person(s) in their households possessed any of 23 specific talents and skills (e.g., cooking, painting, writing, dancing, and singing). They were further asked if the talent was used to benefit others or as a source of additional income. As very few of the respondents indicated that talents or skills were used for profit, and most respondents reported that they did use their talents and skills for the benefits of others, further analyses of the data along these lines were unnecessary.

Respondents were also asked to identify any personal characteristics they were "known for" in their families.

There was at least one (1) respondent who reported having expertise in each of the 23 talents and skills inventory. Certain talents were more often cited, particularly by women, than were others. It was decided to use 5 (approximately 20%) or more reports of the possession of a talent or skill as an indicator that the talent was common to the group (see Table 8).

a) Married women

Married women reported the least number of personal talents and skills in comparison to their spouses and single women. They reported having 9 talents, which were taking care of children, writing, cooking/baking, tutoring in reading, sewing/tailoring, public speaking, performing household handy work, nursing the sick, and counseling. None of the women reported having talents in 8 areas -- carpentry, singing, auto repair, plumbing, repairing household appliances, electrical wiring, dancing, or acting. Five (5) or more of the women, however, reported that their husbands had talents in 11 areas. These were cooking/baking, gardening, carpentry, public speaking, performing general household handy work, auto repair, plumbing, completing forms, writing, counseling, and repairing household appliances.

b) Married men

Married men reported more personal talents, 17, than did the other two (2) groups. They professed talents in cooking, gardening, tutoring, taking care of children, painting, carpentry, public speaking, fixing hair, performing general household handy work, auto repair, plumbing, completing forms, nursing the sick, writing, counseling, repairing household appliances, and electrical wiring. The only area in which married men professed

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Table 8

Perceptions of Talent/Skill Inventory,
Stable Black Families*

Talent/Skill	Married Women: Respondent Possesses	Married Women: Spouse Possesses	Married Men: Respondent Possesses	Married Men: Spouse Possesses	Single Women: Respondent Possesses	Single Women: Child Possesses
a. cooking/baking	x	x	x	x	x	
b. gardening/ yardwork		x	x			
c. sewing/ tailoring	x			x	x	
d. tutoring	x		x	x	x	x
e. painting			x	x		x
f. carpentry		x	x			
g. canning/pre-serving food						
h. childcare	x		x	x	x	
i. singing						x (**)
j. playing musical instrument						x (***)
k. public speaking	x	x	x		x	
l. fixing hair			x		x	x
m. household handywork	x	x	x		x	
n. auto repair		x	x			
o. plumbing		x	x			
p. completing forms		x	x	x	x	
q. nursing the sick	x		x	x	x	
r. writing	x	x	x	x	x	
s. counseling	x	x	x	x	x	
t. repairing appliances		x	x			
u. electrical wiring			x			
v. dancing				x		x (**)
w. acting						x

*An "x" indicates that 5 or more of the respondents reported the factor as a talent/skill.

**Married women reported that their children had talents in singing and dancing.

***Married men reported that their children had talents in playing musical instruments.

having no talent was sewing/tailoring. Men reported that their wives had talents in 10 areas -- cooking, sewing, tutoring, painting, taking care of children, completing forms, counseling, nursing the sick, and dancing.

c) Single women

Single women reported that they had 11 talents. These were cooking, sewing, tutoring, taking care of children, public speaking, fixing hair, performing general household handy work, nursing the sick, completing forms, counseling, and playing a musical instrument. None of the single women reported having talents in 4 areas -- carpentry, canning/preserving food, repairing household appliances, and acting. Single women stated that their children had talents in 7 areas. These were tutoring, painting, singing, playing a musical instrument, fixing hair, dancing and acting.

d) All groups' personal characteristics

When asked if they were known in their families for any personal characteristics, 18 (69.2%) of the married women, 15 (57.7%) of the married men, and 19 (79.2%) of the single women said that they were. Very individualistic answers were given when they were asked to identify the characteristics, but more persons in all groups said that they were known in their families for their coping skills and creativity. Married women more often stated that they were known for counseling and single women more often indicated that they were known for their dependability.

D. Individual Social-Psychological Attributes

Life satisfaction, religiosity, and depressive symptomatology of the study participants were also measured.

1. Life satisfaction

Respondents indicated the extent to which they were satisfied with their overall lives, neighborhoods, jobs, families, and everyday routines. Categories of "satisfied" and "very satisfied" were collapsed into one category as were the categories of "dissatisfied" and "very dissatisfied." The only exception was in the case of family satisfaction where all response categories were reported (see Table 9). The pattern of responses can best be seen in Figure 1 (response categories for family satisfaction were combined here). Men were always more satisfied than were women on all dimensions (except for family where married men and women were equally satisfied when the satisfied and very satisfied categories were collapsed) and married women were more satisfied than were single women on all dimensions except for everyday routine. Generally, men were highly and equally satisfied with their family lives and neighborhoods followed by satisfaction with their overall lives, everyday routines, and their jobs. Married women were most often satisfied with their family lives, followed by satisfaction with their neighborhoods, their overall lives and everyday routines (with which they were equally satisfied), and their jobs. Single women were most often satisfied with their family lives, overall lives, everyday routines, neighborhoods, and their jobs. All groups agreed on the source of most satisfaction -- family life -- and the source of least satisfaction -- job. It is interesting, however, to note the differences in range of satisfaction levels. Men range from a low of 76.9 percent for job

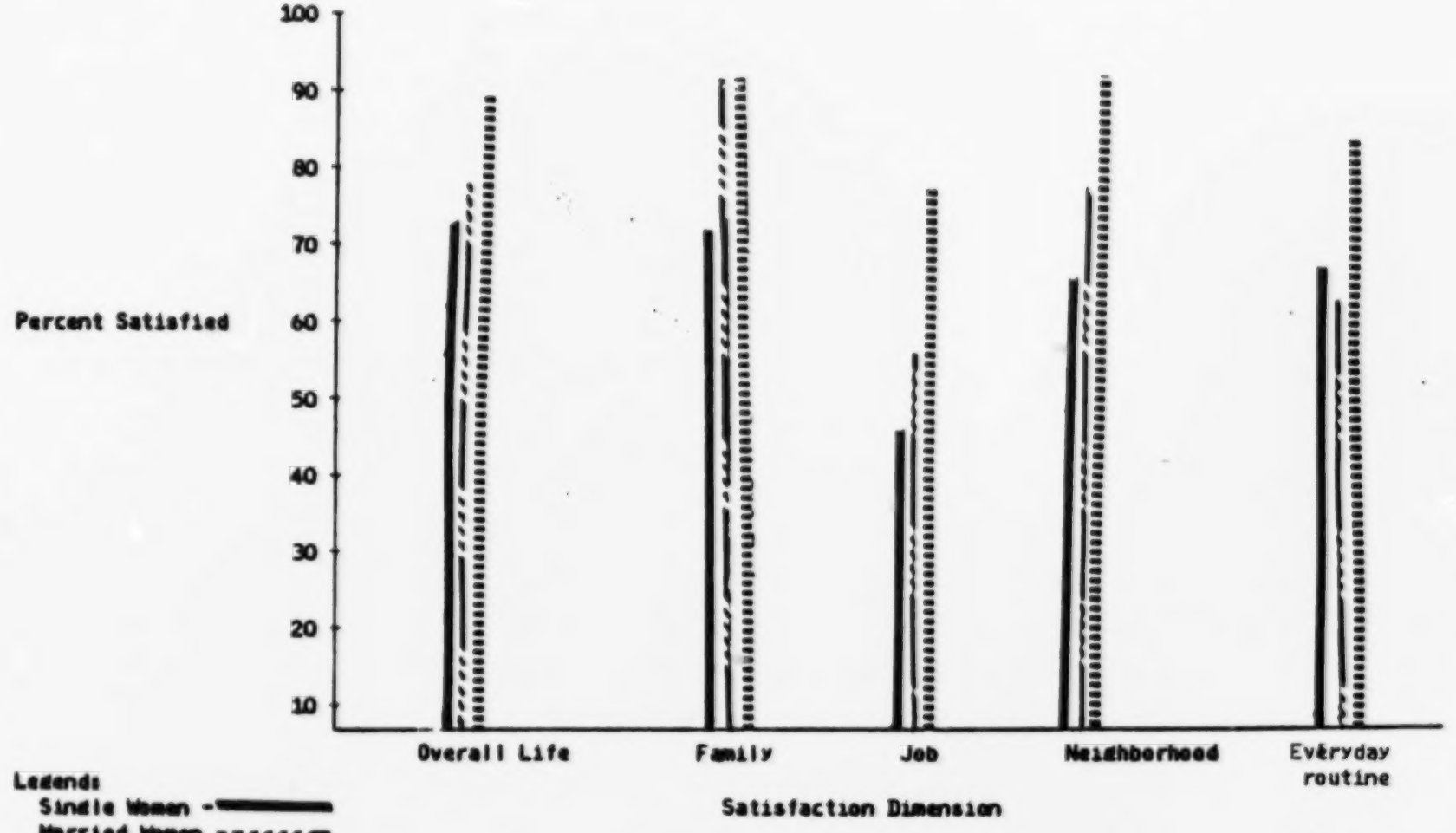
Table 9

Indices of Satisfaction, Stable Black Families

Extent of Satisfaction with....	Married Women N	Married Women %	Married Men N	Married Men %	Single Women N	Single Women %
a. Neighborhood						
Satisfied/very satisfied	20	77.0	24	92.3	18	65.0
Not sure	1	3.8	1	3.8	-	-
Dissatisfied/very dissatisfied	5	19.2	1	3.8	6	25.0
b. Job						
Satisfied/very satisfied	14	53.9	20	76.9	11	45.8
Dissatisfied/very dissatisfied	10	38.5	5	18.2	12	50.0
c. Overall Life						
Satisfied/very satisfied	20	76.9	23	88.5	17	70.8
Neither	2	7.7	1	3.8	2	8.3
Dissatisfied/very dissatisfied	4	15.4	2	7.7	5	20.8
d. Family Life						
Very Satisfied	11	42.3	13	50.0	7	29.2
Somewhat satisfied	13	50.0	11	42.3	10	41.7
Somewhat dissatisfied	-	-	-	-	3	12.5
Very dissatisfied	2	7.7	2	7.7	4	16.7
e. Everyday Routine						
Satisfied/very satisfied	16	61.5	22	84.6	16	66.7
Not sure	6	23.1	2	7.7	5	20.8
Dissatisfied/very dissatisfied	4	15.4	2	7.7	3	12.5

Figure 1

Indices of Satisfaction, Stable Black Families



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satisfaction to a high of 92.3 percent for family life and neighborhood satisfaction. Married women range from a low 53.9 percent job satisfaction level (23% lower than that of married men) to a high 92.3 percent level for satisfaction with family life (equal to that of married men). Single women ranged from a low 45.8 percent job satisfaction level (31.1% lower than that for married men and 8.1% lower than that for married women) to a high of 70.9 percent for satisfaction with family life (21.4% lower than the scores for both married men and women). It appears, then, that while the patterns of life satisfaction are quite similar for all groups, the degree of satisfaction is different, particularly for single women.

2. Depression

The Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression (CES-D) Scale was used to measure depressive symptomatology. A 20-item self-report scale with 4 response categories -- (0) rarely, (1) some of the time, (2) occasionally, and (3) most of the time) -- the scale produces a possible score range of 0 to 60, with higher scores indicating the presence of more depressive symptoms. Scores for these respondents ranged from 3 to 41 with a mean score of 14.53 (n=76). The item to scale correlation coefficients ranged from -.08 to .61 and the majority were significant with an alpha reliability coefficient of .68.

Some researchers have used scores of 16 and above as indicators of the presence of depressive symptoms, although appropriate cut-off scores have not yet been validated (Radloff, 1977). Adopting the 16 point standard for comparison here, it was found that the respondents as a whole were below this mean, that

is, they reported a lower rate of depressive symptoms. However, in comparing the depressive symptoms scores of married women and men and single women, it was found that: (1) men had a lower mean score ($\bar{X}$=12.85) than did both groups of women or the 16 point standard, and (2) single women had a higher mean score ($\bar{X}$=16.67) than did married men and women or the 16 point standard. Married women scored lower ($\bar{X}$=14.23) on the 16 point standard than did single women, but higher than did married men. (See Table 10.)

Selected demographic (age, education, employment, income, occupation, mobility, and the number of children) and socio-cultural (religious preference, the presence of other persons in the household, whether one lived with biological parents, and health status) variables were examined through analysis of variance to determine their impact on the depressive symptomatology scores of the respondents. Results of these analyses must be viewed as tentative and accepted cautiously as the case sizes for particular cells were sometimes very small. These analyses revealed that family type ($F=5.46$, $df=2/52$, $p=.007$), household income ($F=3.96$, $df=3/50$, $p=.01$), and health status ($F=2.96$, $df=3/51$, $p=.04$) were the only selected demographic variables that had a significant effect on the prevalence of depressive symptoms (See Table 10). Specifically, married men ($n=26$, $\bar{X}$=12.85) and persons perceiving themselves to be in excellent health ($n=32$, $\bar{X}$=12.88) had the lowest depression score means. The highest depression score means were found among those persons indicating that they were in fair health ($n=5$, $\bar{X}$=18.00), unemployed ($n=6$, $\bar{X}$=17.83), and with a household income between

Table 10
CES-D Scale
(N=76, $\bar{X}$=14.53)

Variables	N	Mean	S D	F ratio or t	d f	Significance
FAMILY TYPE - GENDER						
Married men	26	12.85	3.51			
Married women	26	14.23	5.31	5.46*	2/52	.007
Single women	24	16.67	6.73			
AGE						
30 - 44 years old	34	15.82	6.07	1.71	59	.09
45 years and over	27	13.30	5.26			
EDUCATIONAL STATUS						
Less than high school	10	16.10	6.35	1.04	3/51	.38
High school	20	14.95	7.76			
Some college	26	14.11	3.88			
College-postgraduate	20	13.85	4.05			
EMPLOYMENT STATUS						
No	6	17.83	7.94	1.45	60	.15
Yes	56	14.21	5.60			
HOUSEHOLD INCOME						
Less than $14,000	15	15.33	5.66	3.96*	3/50	.01
14,000 - 24,999	13	17.54	7.63			
25,000 - 34,999	13	13.07	4.03			
35,000 and over	31	13.26	4.68			
OCCUPATIONAL STATUS						
Professional	40	14.87	6.21	.61	2/49	.55
Clerical-skilled	25	13.08	2.80			
Service-operatives	7	14.29	6.79			
MOBILITY						
No moves in last 5 years	51	14.04	5.89	1.17	2/52	.32
1 or 2 moves	18	16.27	4.28			
3 or more moves	7	13.57	4.46			

*Significant

Table 10 (cont'd)
CES-D Scale
(N=76, $\bar{X}$=14.53)

Variables	N	Mean	S D	F ratio or t	d f	Significance
NUMBER OF CHILDREN						
One	16	14.00	3.23	1.42	3/51	.25
Two	23	13.70	5.43			
Three	14	14.29	3.17			
Four or more	23	15.87	7.51			
RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE						
None	3	14.67	4,16	.84	4/50	.50
Methodist	8	13.63	3.11			
Baptist	34	14.09	6.00			
Catholic	17	16.12	6.89			
Other	14	14.14	3.16			
OTHER CHILDREN/ADULTS IN HOUSE						
No	46	13.87	4.74	-1.57	59	.12
Yes	15	16.60	8.51			
LIVED WITH REAL PARENTS						
No	6	13.50	3.83	- .46	60	.65
Yes	56	14.68	6.07			
HEALTH STATUS						
Poor	2	13.50	10.61	2.96*	3/51	.04
Fair	5	18.00	12.98			
Good	37	15.54	5.18			
Excellent	32	12.88	3.11			
RELIGIOSITY						
Low	10	13.50	3.72			
Medium	15	14.13	4.41	.43	2/70	.65
High	48	15.08	6.11			

*Significant

$14,000 and $24,999 (n=13, $\bar{X}$=17.54). Employment (t=-2.59, df=23, p=.02) and mobility patterns (t=-2.54, df=23, p=.02) were found to have a significant effect on the scores of married men (see Table 11). It appears that the man who was unemployed (n=1, $\bar{X}$= 21.00) and men who had moved within the past five years (n=5, $\bar{X}$=16.20) had higher CES-D score means than did the other men. The number of children was found to be a significant variable for single women (F=11.00, df=3/7, p=.005), with higher depressive scale means for single women who had 3 (n=5, $\bar{X}$=16.40) or more (n=6, $\bar{X}$=20.50) children than did single women who had 1 or 2 children.

Socio-cultural variables appear to have exerted little influence on the presence of depressive symptoms in the respondents (see Table 12). However, single women who had other children or adults living in the household reported higher depressive scores than did other single women (t=-5.80, df=8, p=.000). Furthermore, these women had the highest mean score (35.50) of any other sub-group.

3. Religiosity

The religiosity measure consisted of 12 items which assessed religious behavior, attitudes and practices (Kenny, Cromwell & Vaughan, 1977). A respondent could answer each question as: never, almost never, sometimes, often, or very often. Extreme categories were collapsed. The lowest and highest possible scores were 12 and 36, respectively. The range of scores for the total group was 12 to 36, with higher scores indicating greater religious involvement. The item to scale correlation coefficients ranged from .48 to .87 and all were significant with a .91 alpha reliability coefficient.

Table 11

CES-D Scale by Marital Status and Sex
(Demographic)
Mean=14.53
N=76

Selected Variables	Married Men n = 26						Married Women n = 26						Single Women n = 24					
	N	Mean	SD	F ratio or t	d f	P	N	Mean	SD	F ratio or t	d f	P	N	Mean	SD	F ratio or t	d f	P
AGE																		
30 - 44 years old	12	13.83	3.61	1.20	23	.24	14	16.07	5.02	1.73	23	.10	8	18.38	9.62	-.36	9	.73
45 years and over	13	12.15	3.39				11	12.64	4.84				3	20.67	9.02			
EDUCATIONAL STATUS																		
Less than high school	2	15.50	7.78	2.38	3/21	.10	3	15.33	4.16	.29	3/23	.83	5	16.80	8.11	2.85	3/7	.11
High school	7	11.71	3.35				7	12.57	6.02				6	21.50	9.89			
Some college	9	12.89	1.83				10	14.70	5.44				7	14.86	3.24			
College-postgraduate	8	13.13	4.29				6	14.83	5.64				6	13.83	1.72			
EMPLOYMENT STATUS																		
No	1	21.00	——	-2.59**	23	.02	4	14.00	5.71	-.09	24	.93	1	30.00	—	1.32**	9	.22
Yes	24	12.63	3.17				22	14.27	5.37				10	17.90	8.75			
HOUSEHOLD INCOME																		
Less than $14,000	3	16.33	4.51	2.03	3/21	.14	6	14.33	4.72	.34	3/20	.79	6	15.83	7.57	.73	3/7	.57
14,000 - 24,999	2	13.50	4.95				2	13.50	.71				9	19.33	8.52			
25,000 - 34,999	4	13.50	1.73				4	11.50	6.03				5	14.00	3.94			
35,000 and over	17	12.00	3.37				12	14.75	6.15				2	15.00	—			
OCCUPATIONAL STATUS																		
Professional	16	12.13	3.59	1.20	1/22	.28	12	15.67	5.99	1.46	2/21	.25	12	17.75	7.91	1.03	2/7	.41
Clerical-skilled	9	13.22	2.17				7	11.29	3.82				9	14.33	1.80			
Service-operatives	0	——	—				5	14.40	5.68				2	14.00	8.49			

** Invalid analysis due to the size of the cell

Table 11 (cont'd)

CES-D Scale by Marital Status and Sex
(Demographic)
Mean=14.53
N=76

Selected Variables	Married Men n = 26						Married Women n = 26						Single Women n = 24					
	N	Mean	SD	F ratio or t	d f	P	N	Mean	SD	F ratio or t	d f	P	N	Mean	SD	F ratio or t	d f	P
MOBILITY																		
No moves in last five yrs	20	12.15	2.58	-2.54*	23	.02	16	14.38	5.36	.17	24	.87	7	20.14	11.42	.53	9	.61
1 or more moves	5	16.20	5.17				10	14.00	5.50				4	17.00	2.16			
NUMBER OF CHILDREN																		
One	4	11.75	3.10	1.39	3/21	.27	4	14.25	3.40	.06	3/22	.98	8	15.00	3.02	11.00*	3/7	.005
Two	8	11.50	2.67				10	14.80	7.37				15	15.00	3.54			
Three	5	12.60	2.97				4	13.75	2.87				5	16.40	2.88			
Four or more	9	14.67	4.24				8	13.75	4.62				6	20.50	12.41			

*Significant

Table 12
CES-D Scale by Marital Status and Sex
(Socio-Cultural)
Mean=14.53
N=76

Selected Variables	Married Men n = 26						Married Women n = 26						Single Women n = 24					
	N	Mean	SD	F Ratio or t	d f	P	N	Mean	SD	F ratio or t	d f	P	N	Mean	SD	F ratio or t	d f	P
RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE																		
None	2	13.00	4.24	.14	4/20	.97	1	18.00	—	.16	4/21	.96	0	—	—	.34	2/8	.73
Methodist	3	12.00	2.65				4	14.50	3.70				1	15.00	5.81			
Baptist	12	12.92	4.62				12	14.25	7.50				10	15.30	10.65			
Catholic	6	13.67	2.25				5	14.20	1.93				6	20.17	3.44			
Other	3	11.67	1.53				4	13.00	1.83				7	15.86				
OTHER CHILDREN/ADULTS IN HOUSE																		
No	17	12.71	3.41	-.52	23	.61	21	14.29	5.86	.11	24	.92	8	15.25	3.69	-5.80**	8	.000
Yes	8	13.50	3.96				5	14.00	2.12				2	35.50	7.78			
LIVED WITH REAL PARENTS																		
No	3	10.67	1.53	-1.21	23	.24	3	16.33	3.22	.72	24	.48	0	—	—	-6.95**	10	.000
Yes	22	13.27	3.63				23	13.96	5.51				11	19.00	9.06			
HEALTH STATUS																		
Poor	2	13.50	10.61	.68	3/21	.57	0	—	—	.97	2/23	.39	0	—	—	.86	2/8	.46
Fair	2	12.50	3.54				1	12.00	—				2	26.50	20.51			
Good	9	14.00	3.71				14	15.57	6.04				14	16.50	5.17			
Excellent	13	12.00	2.04				11	12.73	4.19				8	14.50	2.45			
RELIGIOSITY																		
Low	10	13.00	3.33	.05	23	.96	7	13.57	2.37	-.38	24	.71	2	13.50	.71	-.79**	20	.44
High	15	12.93	3.77				19	14.47	6.09				20	17.50	6.99			

**Invalid analysis due to the size of the cell

The mean score for the total group was 28.78 (n=73), a rather high score. Single women scored the highest on religiosity (n=22, X=30.50), followed by married women (n=26, X=28.92), and married men (n=25, X=27.12).

Analyzing for the effects of selected demographic and socio-cultural variables on religiosity (as described for CES-D analyses above), few significant differences were found (see Table 13). The highest religiosity mean scores were found among Catholics (n=17, X=31.17), and the lowest mean score was reported by persons professing no religious preference (n=3, X=13.67).

II. To identify the strategies employed by Black families to resolve the problems of living

The second objective was concerned with identifying the strategies employed by Black stable families in solving problems. Two (2) types of data were critical to explore this objective. It was necessary to: (1) discover the problems they had experienced, if any, and (2) identify methods they used to solve problems. Additionally, assessments of the families' involvement in various potentially helpful networks were made.

A. Problems Experienced

Problems were assessed through the use of checklists and open-ended questions. Table 14 presents the problems experienced by married women and men and single women by general areas and by specific complaint within each area of problems respondents said they had with their children and/or spouses.

Table 13
Religiosity Scale
(N=73, $\bar{X}$=28.78)

Variables	N	Mean	S D	F ratio or t	d f	Significance
FAMILY TYPE - GENDER						
Married men	25	27.12	6.70			
Married women	26	28.92	6.63	1.72	2/70	.19
Single women	22	30.50	5.13			
AGE						
30 - 44 years old	40	28.05	6.43	-1.28	70	.21
45 years and over	28	30.00	6.14			
EDUCATIONAL STATUS						
Less than high school	8	27.00	8.04			
High school	20	30.50	4.01			
Some college	26	26.89	6.99	1.94	3/69	.13
College-postgraduate	19	30.26	6.06			
EMPLOYMENT STATUS						
No	6	30.00	4.82	.49	71	.63
Yes	67	28.67	6.44			
HOUSEHOLD INCOME						
Less than $14,000	14	28.36	6.58			
14,000 - 24,999	12	29.25	6.41			
25,000 - 34,999	13	30.92	5.09	.92	3/66	.44
35,000 and over	31	27.52	6.75			
OCCUPATIONAL STATUS						
Professional	39	28.05	6.63			
Clerical-skilled	24	29.04	6.51	.88	2/66	.42
Service-operatives	6	31.67	2.42			
MOBILITY						
No moves in last 5 years	48	29.08	6.26			
1 or 2 moves	18	27.72	7.16	.35	2/70	.71
3 or more moves	7	29.43	4.54			

Table 13 (cont'd)
Religiosity Scale
($N=73$, $\bar{X}=28.78$)

Variables	N	Mean	S D	F ratio or t	d f	Significanc
NUMBER OF CHILDREN						
One	16	29.13	5.76			
Two	23	27.39	6.58	.95	3/69	.42
Three	13	28.08	6.73			
Four or more	21	30.48	6.17			
RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE						
None	3	13.67	.57			
Methodist	7	28.57	6.75			
Baptist	33	30.09	5.22	8.37*	4/68	.000
Catholic	17	31.17	3.19			
Other	13	25.92	7.14			
OTHER CHILDREN/ADULTS IN HOUSE						
No	52	29.04	6.50	.68	70	.50
Yes	20	27.90	5.96			
LIVED WITH REAL PARENTS						
No	7	30.14	6.12	.60	71	.55
Yes	66	28.64	6.36			
HEALTH STATUS						
Poor	2	27.50	9.19			
Fair	4	28.25	7.81			
Good	35	30.17	5.19	1.12	3/69	.35
Excellent	32	27.41	7.07			
DEPRESSION						
Low	28	27.89	6.96			
Medium	35	28.80	6.21	.37	2/62	.69
High	2	31.50	.71			

*Significant

Table 14

Problems Experienced by Marital Status and Sex, Stable Black Families

Problem	Married Women N	Married Women %	Married Men N	Married Men %	Single Women N	Single Women %
a. General Areas						
Financial	17	65.4	16	61.5	20	83.3
Children	14	53.8	14	53.8	13	54.2
Marital	14	53.8	17	65.4	18	75.0
Job/employment	8	30.8	7	26.9	10	41.7
Health	4	15.4	9	34.6	7	29.2
Emotional	5	19.2	5	19.2	6	25.0
Friends	4	15.4	7	26.9	8	33.3
Neighbors	3	11.5	4	15.4	7	29.2
b. Children (combined responses for 1st and 2nd child)						
Being depressed	14	53.9	11	42.3	15	62.5
Academic	12	46.1	11	42.3	11	45.8
School behavior	7	26.9	10	38.5	10	41.6
Talking back	11	42.3	9	34.6	2	8.3
Bullying others	1	3.8	6	23.0	1	4.2
Lying	4	15.3	8	30.8	13	54.2
Staying out	1	3.8	5	19.2	6	25.0
Disobeying	3	11.5	9	34.6	6	25.0
Stealing	-	-	3	11.5	1	4.2
Using drugs	-	-	3	11.5	-	-
Drinking	-	-	2	7.6	-	-
c. With Spouse (those cited by a minimum of five persons)						
Irritating personal habits	5	19.2	11	42.3	-	-
Keeping house neat	4	15.4	10	38.5	-	-
Not showing love	2	7.7	7	26.9	-	-
Household expenses	5	19.2	6	23.1	-	-
Disciplining children	4	15.4	5	19.2	-	-
How to spend leisure time	5	19.2	5	19.2	-	-
Family responsibilities	5	19.2	1	3.8	-	-

1. **General problem areas**

The most frequent problems experienced by married men, in descending order, were: marital (65.4%), financial (61.5%), children (53.8%), health (34.6%), job/employment and friends (each cited by 26.9% of the respondents), emotional (19.2%) and neighbors (15.4%). Married women most often had experienced the following problems, in descending order: financial (65.4%), marital and children (each cited by 53.8% of the respondents), job/employment (30.8%), emotional (19.2%), health and friends (each cited by 15.4% of the respondents), and neighbors (11.5%). Problems experienced by single women were, in descending order: financial (83.3%), marital (75.0%), children (54.2%), job/employment (41.7%), friends (33.3%), neighbors and health (each cited by 29.2% of the respondents) and emotional (25.0%) (see Table 14).

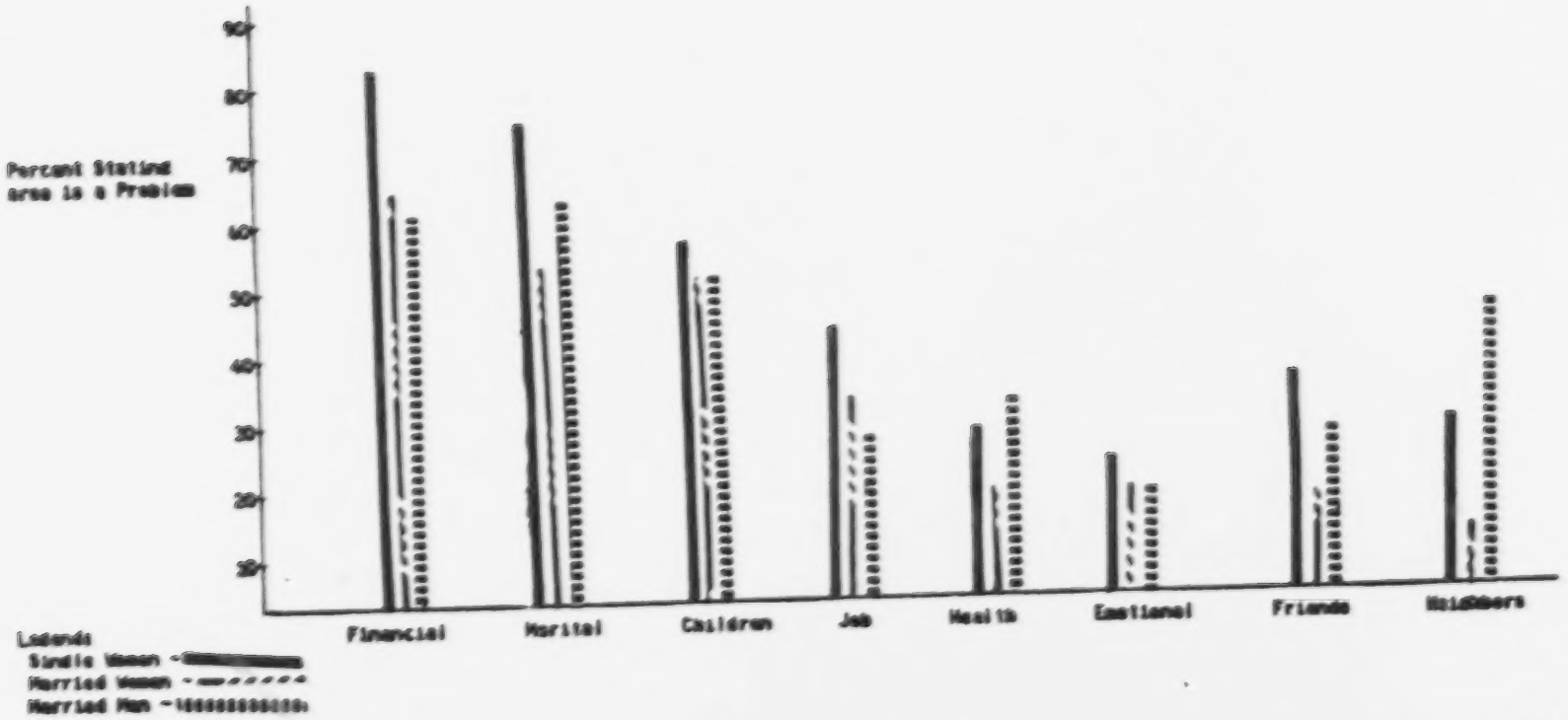
Problems with finances, marriages, and children were the most frequently cited problems by all respondents, although the extent to which these problems were experienced varied among the 3 groups (see Figure 2). Single women generally reported higher rates of problems than did married men and women (except married men reported more health problems). Married couples did not vary much from each other in the extent to which they reported problems (except again in the case of health). (See Figure 2.)

2. **Marital problems**

Couples were asked to indicate sources of disagreement in their marriages. Repondents were asked to indicate how often they disagreed on 17 areas in the past few weeks (see Table 14). The most frequent sources of disagreement as reported by men were, in

Figure 2

Problems Experienced, Stable Black Families



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descending order: irritating personal habits (42.3%), keeping the house neat (38.5%), not showing love (26.9%), household expenses (23.1%), disciplining children and how to spend leisure time (each cited by 19.2% of the husbands), and spouse being away from home too much and the amount of time spouse spends with friends (each cited by 15.4% of the husbands). Husbands and wives agreed on the top 5 areas of disagreement in their marriages, which were household expenses, keeping the house neat, disciplining children, how to spend leisure time, and irritating personal habits.

Keeping the house neat, and irritating personal habits were twice as likely to be a problem for husbands as they were for wives. Problems with in-laws, religion, relatives, and plans for the couple were seldom cited.

Wives' reports of disagreements were almost evenly spread over the items that were presented. Nine (9) problem areas comprised the first and second rank positions. The 4 that were equally indicated by more women (19.2%) were household expenses, how to spend leisure time, irritating personal habits, and family reponsibilities. The second 5 equally indicated areas (at 15.4%), were keeping the house neat, the respondent's being away from home too much, future plans for the children, the respondent's job, and disciplining children.

Respondents were asked in an open-ended question to give the source of most of the disagreements they experienced with their spouses. Men more often said, in descending order, money, time management, and children, while women more often said children, money and time spent with others.

3. Problems with children

Information was obtained on problems of the oldest child in the home and the youngest child of the opposite sex (or simply the youngest child if all children were the same sex). There were 16 husband-wife families and 15 single mother families who completed the questionnaire for the second child. Data on problems of the first and second child were combined. Respondents were asked to indicate if their children had any of 11 problems listed (see Table 14). The most frequent problems married women said their children had were depression/unhappiness (n=14, 53.9%), academic problems (n=12, 46.1%), and talking back (n=11, 42.3%). Men more often reported that their children had problems with depression/unhappiness and academics (n=11, 42.3% for each), and school behavior (n=10,38.5%).

Single mothers reported that their children most often had problems in being depressed/unhappy (n=15, 62.5%), lying (n=13, 54.2%), academics (n=11, 45.8%), and school behavior (n=10, 41.6%).

Married women never reported problems with stealing, drinking, or drug use, while at least one man did for each, and fathers reported more problems with lying, staying out, and disobedience than did married women. Single women never reported problems with drinking or using drugs, and infrequently reported problems with talking back, bullying others, or stealing.

When asked, in an open-ended question, why they disciplined their childen, men stated for being disobedient or for school-related incidents, while married women stated that they disciplined children for school related incidents,

stubbornness/uncooperativeness, and disobedience. Single women most often stated that they disciplined children for school-related problems and for being disrespectful.

4. Family problems

Respondents said they believed that the most common problems of Black families, in general, were monetary concerns, a lack of family unity, a lack of communication, and childrearing (see Table 15). When problems in their own families were identified, the respondents were more likely to cite monetary concerns (except for single women), role confusion (more so for single women), a lack of family unity, and childrearing (see Table 15).

B. Coping Mechanisms

1. Overall findings

Overwhelmingly, all respondents used the same approaches to solving the general problems they had identified (see Table 16), with discussion as the most agreed upon method. Other persons were not frequently sought for assistance in solving problems. The potency of the decision not to seek counsel from another person is revealed in the men's and single women's response of "no one" to the question, "who helped you with this problem?" When persons were sought, however, they were always perceived to be helpful.

2. Use of families

When asked how often their families helped out, half of the men (n=13) stated that they never needed help from their families or that help was not needed often (n=1). When family help was received, it was usually in the form of emotional support or advice (n=14, 53.9%). When married women were asked how often

Table 15

Problems of Black Families as Perceived by Participants in Stable Black Families Study

	Married		Single Women
	Women	Men	
Common problems of Black families, in general	1. Lack of family unity (n=7, 30.2%) 2. Monetary concerns (n=7, 30.2%) 3. Childrearing (n=5, 22.4%) 4. Role confusion (n=3, 13.2%) 5. Lack of communication (n=1, 4.2%)	1. Monetary concerns (n=8, 29.6%) 2. Lack of family unity (n=7, 26.1%) 3. Lack of communication (n=6, 21.4%) 4. Substance abuse (n=4, 15.1%) 6. Childrearing (n=1, 3.8%) 6. Childrearing (n=1, 3.8%)	1. Lack of communication (n=11, 25.4%) 2. Monetary concerns (n=10, 23.3%) 3. Lack of family unity (n=8, 18.6%) 4. Role confusion (n=5, 11.7%) 6. Childrearing (n=4, 9.5%) 6. Substance abuse (n=4, 9.5%)
Problems in respondents' families	1. Monetary concerns (n=5, 36.0%) 2. Childrearing (n=4, 29.0%) 3. Lack of family unity (n=3, 21.0%) 4. Substance abuse (n=1, 7.0%) 5. Role confusion (n=1, 7.0%)	1. Monetary concerns (n=5, 41.7%) 2. Substance abuse (n=2, 24.2%) 3. Childrearing (n=2, 16.7%) 5. Lack of family unity (n=1, 7.2%) 5. Role confusion (n=1, 7.2%)	1. Role confusion (n=5, 30.6%) 2. Lack of family unity (n=4, 24.2%) 2. Childrearing (n=4, 24.2%) 6. Lack of communication (n=1, 4.3%) 6. Monetary concerns (n=1, 5.3%) 6. Substance abuse (n=1, 5.3%)

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Table 16

Persons Contacted and Methods Used to Resolve Problems by Marital Status and Sex, Stable Black Families

Persons/Methods	Married Women N	Married Women %	Married Men N	Married Men %	Single Women N	Single Women %
a. Person Contacted*						
Professional Helper (e.g., psychologist, psychiatrist)	1	3.8	-	-	-	-
Spouse	1	3.8	1	3.8	-	-
Relative	1	3.8	3	11.5	6	25.0
Friend	3	11.5	2	7.7	1	4.2
Other Community Person (e.g., barber, beautician)	2	7.7	-	-	-	-
Minister	3	11.5	1	3.8	1	4.2
No One	-	-	6	23.1	3	12.5
b. Method Used Most Frequently to Solve Disagreements Between Spouses*						
Discussion	19	72.2	24	92.3		
c. Method Used Most Frequently to Resolve Problems with Children*						
Discussion	4	15.4	-	-	5	20.8

*In the follow-up to a question asking the respondents to identify problems they had experienced.

their families provided help to them, nearly 40 percent (n=10) stated that their families helped them fairly or very often. Over half (n=15) indicated that their families provided a great deal of help when it was needed. Only one person indicated that her family was only a little helpful. Families provided help to these married women most often in the following ways: providing money, giving emotional support, taking care of children, and providing household help. Six (6, 25.0%) of the single women stated that they did not often need help from their families. None stated that they never needed help from their families. Over half stated that their families were a great deal of help when needed. Help most often received by single women from their families was emotional support (25.0%), money (20.8%), and child care (16.7%).

3. Use of ministers

When asked specifically if they had ever gone to a minister for help with a problem, 8 single women, 6 married women and 4 men said that they had. Ministers were usually consulted by women on family matters and by men on spiritual matters.

4. Techniques with children

Problems with children were most often solved by discussion or obtaining a tutor. When presented with some child disciplinary strategies, married women and men indicated they more often talked about the problem (84.6% each), took away a privilege (65.3% and 81.8%, respectively), and prohibited the child from using the phone (50.0% each.) Likewise, they rarely withdrew affection or made the child miss a meal. At least one quarter of the husbands and wives would use physical punishment.

Children were most often rewarded with praise by both married women and men. Married women more often stated that they rewarded children by telling the child they were pleased with him/her (100%), kissing and hugging (92.3%), giving a privilege (87.3%), and taking the child out somewhere (84.6%). Husbands were more likely to give a privilege (92.3%), tell the child that he is pleased (84.6%), and take out somewhere (76.9%). Married women were more likely than were men to kiss (92.3% vs. 69.3%). Both were as likely to brag about the child to others (69.2% each). Overall, both married men and women were high in the use of all the reward systems listed. (To give money was the least often cited reward, but half would use it.)

Single women most often disciplined their children by talking about the problem (87.5%), taking away a privilege (54.2%), and restricting the child to his/her room (54.2%). They rarely withdrew their affection or made the child miss a meal. Nearly half (41.7%) would spank their children.

The single mothers most often said they rewarded their children with praise or a show of affection. When asked to indicate the extent to which they used the reward methods listed in the questionnaire, they most often stated they told the child they were pleased and proud (100%), kissed and hugged (85.5%), took the child out somewhere (91.6%), and gave a privilege (83.4%). Seventy-five (75) percent would reward the child with money. In fact, no fewer than 75 percent of the single mothers stated that they used all of the reward methods sometimes or frequently.

5. Disagreements between spouses

When asked how they solved marital problems, both husbands and wives cited discussion as the most frequently used strategy -- 92.3 percent for husbands and 72.2 percent for wives. (See Table 16.)

The respondents were asked to rate the extent to which certain behaviors characterized the way they and their spouses solved problems. Of the 22 behaviors presented (that included such items as consult a friend, cry, walk out, apologize if one is wrong, give in even if one is right, and so forth), the top 5 that husbands and wives cited as characteristic of themselves or their spouses are reported here. Husbands, in descending order, stated that they would discuss the problem with their wives several times (96.1%), offer to discuss the problem (92.3%), apologize if they were wrong (80.8%), decide which one should handle the problem and yield to that person's decision (76.8%), and think on it for a long time (69.2%). Husbands perceived that their wives most often would discuss the problem (92.3%), offer to discuss it (92.3%), act hastily (69.2%), apologize if she were wrong (69.2%), and try to gather lots of information (64.4%).

Wives stated that they were more likely to offer to discuss the problem (96.1%), discuss the problem several times (92.3%), apologize if she were wrong (92.3%), decide which one would handle it and yield to that person's decision (88.4%), and raise their voice (76.9%). Wives perceived that their spouses most often would discuss the problem several times (88.5%), offer to discuss it (88.5%), apologize if he were wrong (84.6%), try to gather lots of information (76.9.%), and act hastily (73.1%).

It is interesting to note that husbands and wives were in agreement on the top two characteristics -- a willingness to discuss problems and apologize, and disagreed on which spouse acts hastily. Spouses perceived their mates as acting hastily, a characteristic they seldom attributed to themselves. Other characteristics seldom or never observed included consulting a professional, ignoring the problem, threatening to leave, hitting or slapping, or throwing something. Men and women nearly equally stated that they would cry (38.5% of the men and 42.2% of the women), walk out (23.1% of the men and 30.8% of the women -- fewer spouses perceived that their mates would walk out), and stop speaking (50% of the men and 65.3% of the women).

C. Networks and Social Participation

Information was also obtained from the study participants on familial and friend relations, neighboring, and organizational participation.

1. Familial and friend relations

Responses to the questions on the number of relatives living in and outside the Washington, D.C. area yielded these results. Of the 76 respondents, 4 (15.4%) married men, 3 (11.5%) married women and 1 (4.2%) single woman had no relatives living in the Washington, D.C. area. Of those persons who had relatives in the area, married women (n=11, 42.3%) and single women (n=11, 45.8%) more often talked to or saw their relatives daily or almost daily, compared to married men (n=6, 23.1%) who more often talked to or saw their relatives once-a-week (see Table 17). However, single women (n=6, 25.0%) and married men (n=6, 23.1%), in comparison to married women (n=11, 42%), talked to or saw their relatives

living outside the local area more often (once every 2 to 3 months for single women and married men and to once-a-year for married women).

A large percentage of the respondents reported having close friend relations with their neighbors. Married men had from 1 to 4 close friends in the neighborhood, while married and single women indicated having from 1 to 6 close friendships among persons in their neighborhoods. Having friends on the job was common as well, with all 3 groups reporting that they had at least 1 to 2 close friends on the job. Of the 72 participants who had close friends in the Washington, D.C. area, half (50.0%) of the married men and over a third (n=10, 38.5%) of the married women communicated with them once-a-week, compared to 12 (50.0%) of the single women who saw or talked to their close friends daily or almost daily (see Table 17). The highest frequency of contact with close friends outside the Washington, D.C. area was reported to be daily or almost daily for single women (n=12, 50.0%), once-twice a year for married men (n=7, 26.9%), and both once-a-month and twice-a-year for the married women (n=18, 69.2% for each). Over 70 percent (n=19, 73.15) of the married men, 80.8 percent (n=21) of the married women, and 83.3 percent (n=20) of the single women indicated that they had a best friend. Married men reported having the longest friendships, lasting up to 10 years, compared to both groups of women. Single (n=10, 41.7%) and married (n=9, 34.6%) women saw or talked to their best friends daily or almost daily, whereas married men (n=8, 30.8%) talked to or saw their best friends once-a-week (see Table 17).

Table 17

Frequency of Communication*
(Saw or Talked to Them)

Variables	Married Men n=26	Married Women n=26	Single Women n-24
Relatives in Washington DC	6(23.1%) once-a-week	11(42.3%) daily/ almost daily	11(45.8%) daily/ almost daily
Relatives outside Washington DC	6(23.1%) every 2-3 months	11(42.3%) once-a-year	6(25.0%) every 2-3 months
Close friends in Washington DC	13(50.0%) once-a-week	10(38.5%) once-a-week	12(50.0%) daily/ almost daily
Close friends outside Washington DC	7(26.9%) once-twice a year	18(69.2%) once-a-month to twice-a-year	12(50.0%) daily/ almost daily
Best friends	8(30.8%) once-a-week	9(34.6%) daily/ almost daily	10(41.7%) daily/ almost daily

* The given categories and frequencies for each variable represents those categories having the highest frequency of response. Possible categories for frequency of communication ranged from: (1)every few years, (2)once-twice a year, (3)every 2-3 months, (4)once-twice a month, (5)once a week, and (6)daily to almost daily.

2. Neighboring

A vast majority of the participants sought aid from neighbors and provided aid to their neighbors as well. The types of aid most frequently requested by married men and women were borrowing things and seeking transportation (n=21, 80.8% for each) and child care (n=18, 69.2% for each). The neighbors also frequently requested the same 3 tasks from the married participants. Single women were more likely to borrow things (n=17, 70.8%), and to seek child care (n=16, 66.7%) and transportation (n=12, 50.0%). The same favors, in the same order, were most frequently requested from them by neighbors.

3. Organizational participation

When asked about participation in clubs or organizations, a large percentage of the sample population reported belonging to school organizations with single women having the highest participation rate in school organizations (n=22, 91.7%). (See Table 18). Church-related affiliations claimed the second highest participation rate among the married men (n=14, 53.8%) and single women (n=19, 79.2%). Over half of the married men (n=14, 53.8%) and 46.2 percent (n=12) of the married women belonged to civic groups. The lowest participation rates were in social clubs for the married men (n=4, 15.4%), political groups for the married women (n=2, 7.7%), and service clubs for the single women (n=2, 8.3%). The respondents appeared to be active participants in these organizations, holding offices in a number of those organizations in which they reported having membership. Community participation in terms of voting was high among the 3 groups.

Table 18

Social Participation Rates

Organizations	Married Men n=26	Married Women n=26	Single Women n=24
Social Clubs	4(15.4%)	8(30.8%)	3(12.5%)
Political Groups	6(23.1%)	2(7.7%)	5(20.8%)
Civic Groups	14(53.8%)	12(46.2%)	3(12.5%)
Labor Unions	6(23.1%)	4(15.4%)	6(25.0%)
Fraternal	10(38.5%)	5(19.2%)	3(12.5%)
Service Clubs	5(19.2%)	5(19.2%)	2(8.3%)
Cultural Clubs	5(19.2%)	6(23.1%)	7(29.2%)
Church-Related Groups	14(53.8%)	7(26.9%)	19(79.2%)
School Organizations	15(57.7%)	16(61.5%)	22(91.7%)

When asked in what ways their organizations had helped them, the married men (n=4, 15.4%) and single women (n=6, 25.0%) reported that the organizations with which they were affiliated were most helpful in providing social activities. Married women more often reported providing psychological-emotional support (n=4, 15.4%) as the way in which organizations helped them.

Chapter IV

Discussion

Presented in this chapter is the overall profile of the families as suggested by the data, program implications of the findings of this study, and future research suggestions.

A. Overall Profile

A stable family, as presented by the study's findings, is one that has encountered problems and successfully resolved them with internal resources. Stable families seldom seek assistance with problems from persons outside the family, but are involved with their relatives, neighbors, and community organizations. Organizations nominated these families for reasons such as their strong kinship bonds, religious-philosophical orientation, parenting skills, and achievement orientation. The families themselves viewed their strengths to be family unity, love, and religion. Interviewers noted that the families geniunely cared for each other, were enthusiastic about life, were able to maintain orderliness in their lives, and were highly religious. Comparisons were made between characteristics of study respondents and theories and/or findings reported in the literature on Black families. In instances where parallel assessments were made, the study families possessed all the characteristics of strong families as put forth by Billingsley (1968) and Hill (1972), and as found by Scanzoni(1971), Royce and Turner (1980), Christopherson (1977) and Stinnett (1977).

Since studies and definitions of stability often involved demographic analyses, the socio-demographic findings of this study were particularly enlightening. The 1981 median annual income for a family of 4 was $13,266 for Black families and $25,517 for white families. The families in this study were, for the most part, above the median in comparison to other Black families, and the husband-wife couples in this study were above the median in comparison to other Black and white husband-wife units. All the families made $4,000 or more and nearly half of the couples made over $35,000 per year. Furthermore, many (20-30%) had sources of additional income. Only 7 individuals were unemployed and 4 of them were married women with working husbands. Over 50 percent of all the respondents had completed college or graduate school. Over 90 percent of the couples and almost half of the single women owned their homes. Half of the families had only 1 or 2 children or fewer (single mothers were twice as likely as were husband-wife couples to have only one child). These families generally rank higher on the most often referenced socio-demographic indices of success in comparison to other Black families. It seems likely that their socio-economic advantages were acquired as a result of personal strengths and efforts they, perhaps, learned from childhood homes. Very few seemed to come from childhood homes where these socio-economic advantages were plentiful (as evidenced by the large childhood families and the low paying jobs of their parents).

B. <u>Program Implications</u>

The study produced much information that can be used to identify and implement needed programs. Discussed here are areas

indicated as problems by these stable families and suggestions are made on how churches and other organizations can address these problems.

1. Problem areas

One of the most revealing aspects of the study was the extent to which these stable, strong families had experienced problems and expressed dissatisfaction with some areas of their lives. One can only speculate on the extent to which these areas are a problem to less internally resourceful families.

Everyone complained of financial, marital, and child problems. Most were also more dissatisfied with their jobs than they were with any other aspect of their lives. Programs, therefore, need to be developed, that address these areas.

Moreover, some groups reported problems more often than did other groups. For instance, single women on the whole were more dissatisfied in all areas of their lives than were others, and more of them reported problems than did married men and women. With the exception of marital problems, married men generally reported problems at lower rates than did both groups of women. Consequently, it would be necessary to tailor programs to address not only the particular needs of households, but also for individuals within the household. For example, single women with children have particular needs that other single women or married women might not have (e.g., transportation, child care, social relationships). Married women may have problems that their husbands may not have.

For married couples, especially, there were some findings that suggest that some problems between spouses may need to be

explored. Husbands' and wives' perceptions of (or reports of) certain items differed, suggesting that improving marital communication lines might be beneficial. For example, wives reported lower household incomes than did husbands; husbands reported more children and marital problems; and wives saw themselves as less talented than their husbands while husbands saw their wives as more talented than the wives perceived themselves to be.

2. Human resources

The most frequently cited common strength among all the study participants was their religiosity. In addition to their religiosity, they professed skills in counseling, problem solving, dependability, public speaking, and so forth. The married men and single women seemed particularly capable of functioning as counselors, presentors, or "family aides" if the opportunity to do so were presented to them.

Moreover, many of the families nominated had higher educational training which prepared them to address some problem areas professionally. For example, one respondent was a psychologist, another was a teacher with experience in arranging programs for children. It is likely that churches and other organizations could establish programs and professionally staff them with their own members. Considering the families' need for money, some payment (perhaps at a reduced rate) could be made to them for participating in such programs. It should also be noted that the validity of the nomination strategy to identify strong families accurately was demonstrated, suggesting that perceptions of others can be used reliably to select exemplary models.

3. Program recommendations

It is highly recommended that the church undertake programs that seek to improve the economic viability of families. One way of doing this is by sponsoring a series of workshops on financial planning and career development tailored for adolescents and adults. Investment clubs could also be initiated through the church by the provision of financial consultants for such clubs and encouraged to donate portions of their returns to the church to cover other program activities.

Family life programs, a staple of church program efforts, are still desperately needed. Professional help is also needed. Parents need help in coping with their children's problems. Parents in the study seemed to be particularly skillful at disciplining and rewarding their children. They discussed problems a great deal. Stable parents like them could offer practical parenting tips to other church members through workshops, short Sunday School presentations, or the church bulletins. Expert help may be needed to identify danger signs in children (e.g., suicide and depression). Depression in children was a problem for a third of the parents participating in this study.

Marital enrichment activities are needed and its seems more so for women than men. Married women seemed more in need of "ego-boosting" support than did men or single women. Using the "enhancement of family life" as an overall theme, the church might prove resourceful in the stabilization of Black families. The theme could be reinforced through training programs and workshops on issues such as the following:

- development of communication skills
- development of successful coping strategies
- goal-achievement
- male-female relationships
- parent-child relationships
- household management
- role definitions
- religion and family functioning

Materials can be developed from the study's questionnaire to aid in family enrichment activities. For example, it might be helpful for family members to complete inventories of household chores, talents, problems, strengths, and so forth (as presented in the results section of this report) and compare them with other family members' perceptions. User guides could be developed to make self-study guides. Cassette tapes could also be made.

Above all other things, any program planner must remember that support and intervention efforts with Black families will need to be as informal as possible to prevent catastrophic problems. These stable families seldom sought formal or any outside source of help when they needed it. Had they not have been so self-competent, in terms of economic resources and personal skills, they might not have been nominated for the study. To develop their own competence, other families will need to be reached by programs before they are willing to admit they need help. Prevention programming is essential.

C. Research Suggestions

Methodological and content-specific research needs are suggested by this study. First, longitudinal studies with observational data are needed to chart the course of stability and instability in families as they emerge. Observational data would provide information based on factors other than subjective,

self-report data, and would, perhaps, be more reliable. In addition, interactions with children and other family members, particularly the extended kin members, need to be included as research priorities in future studies of the Black family.

Specific content areas that need to be explored include the following:

- Child problems (particularly the occurrence of childhood depresssion). A number (up to a third) of the parents reported that their children had been depressed. Some investigation of this phenomenon is needed to discover if the children are truly clinically depressed, and to, in general, uncover the patterns of childhood psychological and behavioral problems in strong Black families.

- Problem resolutions. Indepth analyses of the mechanics of how particular problems are solved are needed. For example, most of the respondents reported that discussion was used to solve problems. Specific discussion techniques would be useful for developing practical program materials.

- Psychological benefits of marriage. Some exploration of the effects of marriage on the self-esteem of women and men is needed. Men in this study seemed much more satisfied overall than did married or single women. The benefits and deficits of marriage as perceived by Black married couples and singles of both sexes (and all marital status categories -- divorced, never married, married) might suggest ideas for the stabilization of Black family life.

- Employment. Some work on career planning and job satisfaction is desperately needed. Why were so many respondents dissatisfied with their jobs and what would it take to achieve a high level of job satisfaction?

- Family life resource inventory. A research project to identify the types of efforts developed to provide support to Black families is needed. In addition, the development of self-help materials and strategies to better family life is indicated.

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